

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 362

Designating the month of February 2012 as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 31, 2012

Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the month of February 2012 as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”.

Whereas, although dating violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking affect women regardless of age, teenage girls and young women are especially vulnerable;

Whereas, according to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey recently conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (referred to in this preamble as the “CDC”), the majority of victimization starts early in life, as most victims of rape and intimate partner violence first experience such violence before age 24;

Whereas, according to the Liz Claiborne Inc. 2009 Parent/Teen Dating Violence Poll, approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical,

emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a rate that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting young people;

Whereas, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (referred to in this preamble as the “YRBSS”) of the CDC, nearly 10 percent of high school students have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend during the past year;

Whereas, according to the American Journal of Public Health, more than 1 in 4 teenagers have been in a relationship where a partner is verbally abusive;

Whereas, according to a survey conducted by the YRBSS, almost 20 percent of teenage girls who were exposed to physical dating violence did not attend school on 1 or more occasions during the 30 days preceding the survey because the girls felt unsafe at school or on the way to or from school;

Whereas a violent relationship in adolescence can have serious ramifications for the victim, putting the victim at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide, and adult revictimization;

Whereas being physically or sexually abused makes teenage girls—

- (1) up to 6 times more likely to become pregnant;
- and
- (2) more than twice as likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease;

Whereas, according to a recent study published in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, more than half of teenagers and young adults treated at an inner-

city emergency room reported having been a victim or perpetrator of dating violence;

Whereas nearly 3 in 4 “tweens”, individuals who are between the ages of 11 and 14, report that dating relationships usually begin at age 14 or younger, and approximately 72 percent of students in eighth or ninth grade report dating;

Whereas 1 in 5 tweens report having a friend who is a victim of dating violence, and nearly half of tweens who are in relationships know a friend who is verbally abused;

Whereas more than 3 times as many tweens (20 percent) as parents of tweens (6 percent) admit that parents know little or nothing about the dating relationships of tweens;

Whereas, according to the Liz Claiborne Inc. 2009 Parent/Teen Dating Violence Poll, although 82 percent of parents are confident that they could recognize the signs that their child was experiencing dating abuse, a majority of parents, or 58 percent, could not correctly identify all the warning signs of dating abuse;

Whereas 74 percent of teenage boys and 66 percent of teenage girls say they have not had a conversation with a parent about dating abuse in the past year;

Whereas, according to a National Crime Prevention Council survey, 43 percent of middle and high school students reported experiencing cyberbullying during the past year;

Whereas 1 in 4 teens in a relationship report having been called names, harassed, or put down by a partner through the use of a cell phone, including through texting;

Whereas 3 in 10 young people have sexted, and 61 percent of young people who have sexted report being pressured to do so at least once;

Whereas, according to the Liz Claiborne Inc. 2010 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll, 43 percent of college women who date report experiencing violent and abusive dating behavior;

Whereas 70 percent of college students who experienced relationship abuse failed to realize that they were in an abusive relationship at the time, and 60 percent of college students who were in an abusive relationship said that no one stepped in to help them;

Whereas the severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to be greater in cases where a pattern of violence was established during adolescence;

Whereas primary prevention programs are a key part of addressing teen dating violence, and successful examples of such programs include education, community outreach, and social marketing campaigns that are culturally appropriate;

Whereas educating middle school students and the parents of those students about the importance of building healthy relationships and preventing teen dating violence is key to deterring dating abuse before it begins;

Whereas skilled assessment and intervention programs are also necessary for young victims and abusers; and

Whereas the establishment of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month will benefit schools, communities, and families regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or sex: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) designates the month of February 2012 as
2 “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Pre-
3 vention Month”;

4 (2) supports communities that are empowering
5 teenagers to develop healthier relationships through-
6 out their lives; and

7 (3) calls upon the people of the United States,
8 including young people, parents, schools, law en-
9 forcement officials, State and local officials, and in-
10 terested groups to observe National Teen Dating Vi-
11 olence Awareness and Prevention Month with appro-
12 priate programs and activities that promote aware-
13 ness and prevention of teen dating violence in their
14 communities.

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