



Councilmember Charles Allen



Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the month of April 2018 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month” in the District of Columbia, and to urge residents to show their support for victim-survivors and work to prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

WHEREAS, women’s organized protests against sexual violence began in the late 1970s in England with ‘Take Back the Night’ marches in direct response to the violence that women encountered as they walked the streets at night;

WHEREAS, these activities became more coordinated and soon developed into a movement that extended to the United States, and in 1978, the first “Take Back the Night” events in the United States were held in San Francisco and New York City;

WHEREAS, the movement that developed in the United States was also created in the wake of the civil rights movement which was buoyed by Black women’s activism to disrupt the persistent and systemic sexual violence that they experienced;

WHEREAS, each member of the Washington, D.C., community shares the collective responsibility to promote the health and well-being of District residents by interrupting the cultural norms which allow sexual violence to occur;

WHEREAS, the month of April has been designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the United States and was first observed nationally in April 2001, after the alarming statistics of sexual assaults and underreporting became more apparent;

WHEREAS, sexual assault awareness activities have expanded to include the issue of sexual violence against men and men’s participation in ending sexual violence;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Justice’s National Crime Victimization Survey, every 98 seconds, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted;

44 WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's National
45 Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, one out of every five women has been the victim-
46 survivor of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime;

47 WHEREAS, nearly 3 million men in the United States have been the victim-survivors of
48 sexual assault or rape;

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50 WHEREAS, girls 16 to 19 years of age are four times more likely than the general
51 population to be victim-survivors of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault;

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53 WHEREAS, women aged 18 to 24 who are not in college are four times more likely to
54 have experienced sexual violence than women in general;

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56 WHEREAS, only 23% of rape or sexual assaults are reported to the police;

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58 WHEREAS, victim-survivors of sexual assault are 3 times more likely to suffer from
59 depression, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 13 times more likely
60 to abuse alcohol, 26 times more likely to abuse drugs, and 4 times more likely to contemplate
61 suicide;

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63 WHEREAS, approximately 70% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to
64 the victim-survivor, and 45% of rapists are an acquaintance;

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66 WHEREAS, 5% of rapists will reoffend within 3 years, and 24% of rapists will reoffend
67 within 15 years;

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69 WHEREAS, despite the prevalence of sexual violence and its disproportionate effect on
70 at-risk populations, such as the LGBTQ community and victim-survivors with disabilities, sexual
71 violence remains the most underreported crime;

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73 WHEREAS, sexual violence exists on a spectrum of behaviors ranging from verbal
74 harassment to sexual assault, it is imperative to recognize that sexual harassment in the workplace
75 is a pervasive yet often overlooked manifestation of sexual violence;

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77 WHEREAS, sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of discrimination which violates
78 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;

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80 WHEREAS, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Task Force on the Study
81 of Harassment in the Workplace found that 45% of all workplace harassment complaints filed in
82 2015 were based on sex;

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84 WHEREAS, 70% of people who are sexually harassed in the workplace never file a formal
85 complaint;

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87 WHEREAS, sexual harassment in the workplace has profound financial and social costs;

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89 WHEREAS, sexual harassment victim-survivors exhibit detrimental psychological and
90 physical health effects;

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92 WHEREAS, bystanders to sexual harassment in the workplace are also psychologically
93 impacted, thereby decreasing productivity and increasing staff turnover;

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95 WHEREAS, at least 1 in 4 children have experienced child neglect or abuse (including
96 physical, emotional, and sexual) at some point in their lives, and 1 in 7 children have experienced
97 abuse or neglect in the last year;

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99 WHEREAS, adverse childhood experiences like sexual trauma predisposes individuals to
100 inflammatory and autoimmune diseases such as asthma, heart disease, fibromyalgia, Crohn's
101 disease, type 1 diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis;

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103 WHEREAS, victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse experience more depression,
104 obesity, autoimmune diseases, eating disorders, and addictions;

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106 WHEREAS, victim-survivors of child sexual abuse have higher rates of being sexually
107 assaulted again as adults. In fact, children who had an experience of rape or attempted rape in their
108 adolescent years are 13.7 times more likely to experience rape or attempted rape in their first year
109 of college; and

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111 WHEREAS, the District of Columbia now joins all 50 states, the territories, and other
112 major cities in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

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114 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; That this
115 resolution may be cited as the "Sexual Assault Awareness Month Recognition Resolution of
116 2018."

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118 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and supports Sexual Assault
119 Awareness Month, urging residents to show their support for victim-survivors and work to prevent
120 sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

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122 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
123 the District of Columbia Register.