

## Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 123

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 35

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 123—Relative to Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day California.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 31, 2012.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 123, Bonnie Lowenthal. Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Denim Day California.

This measure would designate the month of April 2012 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, would recognize April 25, 2012, as Denim Day California, and would encourage everyone to wear jeans on that day to help communicate the message that there is no excuse for, and never an invitation to commit, rape.

WHEREAS, In 2011, California rape crisis centers provided direct crisis intervention services to 29,292 individuals, provided 6,473 sexual assault forensic examinations, and provided community education services for more than 127,000 people; and

WHEREAS, Women, children, and men are all victims of sexual assault, and it is estimated that nearly one in two women and one in five men experience sexual violence other than rape throughout their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports that there are over 22 million survivors of rape throughout the United States and 2 million of those survivors of rape are currently living in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault impact women, children, and men of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Women, children, and men suffer multiple types of sexual violence including acquaintance rape, stranger rape, sexual assault by an intimate partner, gang rape, incest, serial rape, ritual abuse, sexual harassment, child sexual molestation, prostitution, pornography, and stalking; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the immediate physical and emotional costs, sexual assault may also have severe and long lasting consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, major depression, homelessness, eating disorders, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified sexual assault as a significant, costly, and preventable health issue; and

WHEREAS, A coalition of rape crisis centers and their allies, known as the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, has emerged to directly

confront this crisis with the cooperation of law enforcement agencies, churches, health care providers, and other helping professionals from California's diverse communities; and

WHEREAS, It is our responsibility to support rape survivors by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the compassion and dedication of the individuals involved in this effort, applaud their commitment, and increase public understanding of this significant problem; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the strength, courage, and challenges of the victims and survivors of sexual assault and their families and friends as they struggle to cope with the reality of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize that not all victims of sexual assault survive, either at the time of the assault or later, due to the horrific long-term trauma that sexual assault often inflicts upon victims; and

WHEREAS, There are rape prevention and education efforts underway throughout California to challenge the societal myths and behaviors that perpetuate rape and to engage communities in a common goal of ending sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, It is crucially important to hold perpetrators responsible for sexual attacks, and to prevent sexual violence at every opportunity; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, the Italian Supreme Court overturned the conviction of a man who sexually assaulted an 18-year-old woman after the court determined that, "because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex"; and

WHEREAS, Enraged by the court decision, within a matter of hours the women in the Italian Parliament launched into immediate action and protested by wearing jeans to work; and

WHEREAS, Nations and states throughout the world have followed the lead of the Italian Parliament by designating their own "Denim Day" to raise public awareness about rape and sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Harmful attitudes about rape and sexual assault allow these crimes to persist and allow survivors to be revictimized through victim-blaming attitudes and unresponsive government systems; and

WHEREAS, California is a national leader within the judicial, criminal justice, medical, rape crisis, and health communities in promoting victim-centered approaches to victims of crime; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring,* That the month of April 2012 shall be designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature recognizes April 25, 2012, as "Denim Day California" and encourages everyone to wear jeans on that day to help communicate the message that there is no excuse for, and never an invitation to commit, rape.