

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 24, 2012

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 123

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal

March 6, 2012

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 123, as amended, 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.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In 2011, California rape crisis centers provided
2 direct crisis intervention services to ~~29,993~~ 29,292 individuals,
3 provided ~~6,887~~ 6,473 sexual assault forensic examinations, and
4 provided community education services for more than ~~120,000~~
5 127,000 people; and

6 ~~WHEREAS, The American Medical Association has stated that~~
7 ~~a “woman is raped every 46 seconds in the United States” and that~~
8 ~~sexual assault is a “silent epidemic”; and~~

9 WHEREAS, Women, children, and men are all victims of sexual
10 assault, and it is estimated that nearly one in two women and one

1 in five men experience sexual violence other than rape throughout
2 their lifetime; and

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

7 WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault ~~impacts~~ *impact* women,
8 children, and men of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds;
9 and

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, A coalition of rape crisis centers and their allies,
23 known as the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, has
24 emerged to directly confront this crisis with the cooperation of law
25 enforcement agencies, churches, health care providers, and other
26 helping professionals from California's diverse communities; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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