

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Sexual Assault Awareness Month was first observed by the United States in April 2001 to raise awareness about sexual assault, ways to prevent sexual violence and to support survivors; and

WHEREAS, today, millions of men, women, and children and people who are gender non-conforming are sexually assaulted and are too often left with little support and few solutions; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be affected by sexual assault in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, we know that transgender women, especially trans women of color, are disproportionately more likely to suffer discrimination, violence and abuse; and

WHEREAS, we must commit to the elimination and prevention of this hate as well as fight to change all norms that perpetuate discrimination against gender queer individuals in our city;

WHEREAS, we know that 94 percent of women who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native living in Seattle reported they had been raped or were coerced into sex at least once in their lives; and we know that there is a crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in our state;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that homeless/housing insecure women face unique challenges that affect their well-being, health, and families, including being at high risk for sexual assault and exploitation;

WHEREAS, we know that people with disabilities are sexually assaulted 7 times more often than people without disabilities;

WHEREAS, we reject violence in all its forms, and especially that which targets those who identify as women, in the home, on the streets, in the workplace, in media, and on the Internet; and support survivors in their recovery;

WHEREAS, we know that working together to educate our community about sexual violence, supporting survivors when they come forward, speaking out against harmful attitudes and actions, and engaging in best-practice sexual violence prevention work helps end sexual violence;

WHEREAS, efforts to change belief systems and practices that perpetuate sexual violence, especially in targeted vulnerable populations, require the participation of the entire community;

WHEREAS, Seattle must work to become a place where sexual assault is treated as a public health issue, where social perceptions and behaviors around sexual violence are changed, where survivors can access an array of services that are culturally appropriate and relevant to their needs; and ultimately where sexual violence decreases in frequency;

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle invests in a comprehensive network of social services, and a specialized response to sexual assault that addresses the needs of survivors by providing a 24-hour response system, crisis intervention, information and referrals, and general, medical and legal advocacy;

WHEREAS, we find ourselves in an unprecedented public health crisis, and we know that the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” emergency order sometimes put people into even more dangerous situations in their homes; and

WHEREAS, we have seen over the course of the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” emergency order, more people calling sexual assault hotlines regarding the distress they are experiencing related to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, in this time of crisis and uncertainty, we must remember that those who are in danger of gender based and/or sexual violence must still be able to receive the services that they need to recover;

WHEREAS, though nonessential businesses are closed because of the public health crisis of COVID-19, sexual assault and domestic violence programs are still open and available to provide the services necessary to survivors;

WHEREAS, we must be able to ensure that survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence know that there are safe, confidential services available to them even in the midst of this public health crisis that include counseling, safety planning, legal services and housing assistance so that they can thrive;

WHEREAS, by this Proclamation, we affirm these critical services and support resources are available to survivors of sexual assault;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL PROCLAIMS APRIL 2020 TO BE

Sexual Assault Awareness Month



Council President M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juarez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda



Councilmember Alex Pedersen



Councilmember Kshama Sawant



Councilmember Dan Strauss