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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: March 31, 2023

RE: **RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS  
MONTH**

Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

**BY COUNCIL MEMBER GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO**

**RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

- WHEREAS**, Sexual violence affects all people, regardless of geography, race, age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or economic background; and
- WHEREAS**, Sexual violence is widespread and has public health implications for every resident of Detroit, where the rate of sexual assault has increased in recent years; and
- WHEREAS**, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nationally one in three women and one in four men have experienced some form of sexual assault in their lifetime, and one in four women and 1 in 26 men have survived a rape or attempted rape; and
- WHEREAS**, Sexual violence can have profound long-term impacts on survivors, including PTSD, anxiety, depression, self-harm/suicide, substance abuse, eating disorders, etc.; and
- WHEREAS**, We must be vigilant to address sexual assault wherever it occurs, whether it is in our homes, workplaces, schools, places of worship, public spaces, or online; and
- WHEREAS**, Child sexual abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that, according to the CDC, about one in 13 boys and one in four girls will experience sexual assault before age 18, which can lead to lifelong shame and trauma; and
- WHEREAS**, It is also imperative to address sexual assault in institutions of higher learning, where 13 percent of students are sexually assaulted during their time in college<sup>1</sup>; and
- WHEREAS**, Even with a noticeable increase in sexual assault awareness over the last few years due to social movements like Me Too, two-thirds of sexual assaults are still tragically unreported according to the Department of Justice; and
- WHEREAS**, The City has a responsibility to increase awareness of sexual assault, to support survivors, to encourage survivors to come forward without shaming them, and to hold perpetrators of sexual assault accountable for their actions; and
- WHEREAS**, It is particularly vital for the City of Detroit to demonstrate visible action on this issue considering that DPD notoriously let thousands of rape kits go untested for decades, thereby contributing to the feelings of survivors that it is pointless to report sexual assault; and
- WHEREAS**, We must all work together to educate our community about consent, efforts to prevent sexual assault, and ways to support survivors; and
- WHEREAS**, The Detroit City Council strongly supports the efforts of national, state, and local partners, and of every citizen to actively engage in public and private efforts, including conversations about what sexual violence is, how to prevent it, how to help survivors connect with services,

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<sup>1</sup> David Cantor, Bonnie Fisher, Susan Chibnall, Reanna Townsend, et. al. Association of American Universities (AAU), [Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct](#) (January 17, 2020).

and how every segment of our society can work together to better address sexual violence;  
and

**WHEREAS,** The Detroit City Council is mindful of the fact that sexual assault remains a serious issue in our society, that harmful attitudes allow these crimes to persist and survivors to be re-victimized, and the importance of each of us speaking out against it in order to change attitudes which allow sexual assault to persist; and

**WHEREAS,** Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month calls attention to misconceptions and misinformation about sexual assault, and it is important that we rededicate ourselves to creating a society where sexual assault is not tolerated, survivors are supported and all persons in our community can live without fear of sexual assault; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED,** That the Detroit City Council recognizes April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month;  
**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED,** That the Detroit City Clerk is directed to send this resolution to Mayor Mike Duggan and to major local news media outlets.