



## Legislation Text

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### **PROCLAIM APRIL 2015 AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH IN THE CITY OF GLENDALE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE “START BY BELIEVING” PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

Staff Contact: Debora Black, Police Chief

Accepted By: Ms. Kim Hedrick

Accepted By: Ms. Tiffany Sarmiento

Accepted By: Ms. Tara Stall

#### **Purpose and Recommended Action**

This is a request for City Council to proclaim April 2015 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the City of Glendale and encourage community participation in the “Start by Believing” public awareness campaign. The proclamation will be presented to sexual violence survivors Kim Hedrick, Tiffany Sarmiento, and Tara Stall.

#### **Background**

Sexual violence crosses all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds. Statistics show one in six women, and one in 33 men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Sadly, national estimates reveal that less than 32 percent of sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement because of the embarrassment and stigma associated with the assault and the fear of not being believed. In the late 1980s, the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault selected a week in April to focus attention on sexual assault issues, raising awareness and increasing an emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence. In the late 1990s, many advocates began coordinating activities throughout the month of April on a regular basis, promoting the idea for a recognized month. Sexual Assault Awareness Month was first observed nationally in April 2001.

Each year during the month of April, community-based organizations, government agencies, businesses, campuses, and individuals participate in events to highlight sexual violence as a public health, human rights, and social justice issue, and reinforce the need for prevention efforts. The City of Glendale is committed to promoting the awareness of sexual violence, working with the Police Department to bring justice to offenders and prevent future sexual violent crimes. Through recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and participation in the “Start by Believing” national awareness campaign, the city supports the victims’ need to be heard as one of the first steps towards healing. The “Start by Believing” public awareness campaign is uniquely focused on the public response to sexual assault and is designed to improve the responses of friends, family members, first responders, and the community to assist victims in accessing supportive resources and engaging the criminal justice system.

Recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month provides citizens with an opportunity to increase their understanding of sexual violence and encourages the community to recommit to ending the outrage of sexual assault, giving survivors the support they need to heal, and building a culture that never tolerates sexual violence. This month also allows for the recognition and expression of gratitude to the people and agencies

that support victims of sexual violence and educate the public about its prevalence.