

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS
AND SHEILA KUEHL

APRIL 28, 2020

Declaring April 2020 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month” and April 29, 2020 as “Denim Day”

Sexual violence is a serious public health issue. It is not an event that impacts one person at a time—but, instead, it is devastating and destructive conduct that hurts us all. In recent years, through #MeToo and other campaigns, courageous survivors have come forward exposing the reality that sexual violence is and has been used throughout our society to exercise power and control, create fear, and perpetuate myths that blame victims for violence against them. By recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day, we take the opportunity to support survivors and to speak with one voice to say that we will not tolerate sexual violence in any form at any time.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Los Angeles County has instituted “Safer at Home.” While this critical and necessary response is working successfully to protect many in Los Angeles County, we must also recognize that there are some for whom home is not safe because of sexual violence. Our acknowledgment of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day underscores the County’s strong commitment to

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provide support to every survivor who needs services and to collective efforts that can and will work to prevent sexual violence in the future.

Peace Over Violence launched Denim Day 21 years ago in Grand Hope Park on 9th and Grand Avenue in Los Angeles County to support survivors by renewing our commitment to exposing harmful behaviors and attitudes about sexual violence. Denim Day is a campaign in response to a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court, where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices ruled that the victim implied consent because she wore jeans and, therefore, she must have aided the perpetrator in removing them. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament rebelled against this ruling by wearing jeans to work, in solidarity with the woman impacted by that decision and to all who are victimized by sexual assault. Now, as part of a sexual violence prevention and education campaign, people all over Los Angeles County and throughout the Country, join in solidarity by wearing denim on Denim Day as a visible means of protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual violence. The first Denim Day in Los Angeles County was held in April 1999 and has continued annually since.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim the month of April 2020 as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month.”
2. Proclaim April 29, 2020 as “Denim Day” in partnership with Peace Over Violence to encourage residents to wear jeans in solidarity.

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