

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

April 1, 2025

Proclaiming April 2025 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; April 27, 2025, as Invincible Day; and April 30, 2025, as Denim Day in Los Angeles County

The month of April is recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a time to renew and strengthen our commitment to preventing all forms of sexual violence. This issue extends beyond sexual assault to include child sexual abuse, incest, sexual coercion, rape, and sexual harassment. It affects individuals of all ages, geographies, gender identities, sexual orientations, races, and cultures. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 43% of women and 25% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual violence, including rape, attempted rape, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual contact and/or assault.¹ Additionally, 81% of female and 71% of male survivors of rape or attempted rape reported that their first assault occurred before the age of 25². One in five women reported experiencing sexual violence from an intimate partner.

Locally, the 2023 Los Angeles County (County) Health Survey estimates that 427,000 adults in the County have experienced unwanted sex by an intimate partner³.

¹ Smith, S. G., Zhang, X., Basile, K. C., Merrick, M. T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., & Chen, J. (2018). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 data brief – updated release*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

² Smith, S. G., Zhang, X., Basile, K. C., Merrick, M. T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., & Chen, J. (2018). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 data brief – updated release*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

³ 2023 Los Angeles County Health Survey; Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

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Between 2018 and 2022, there were 6,267 emergency room visits for sexual assault in the County: 87% were females and 80% were individuals under the age of 35. Black residents had the highest rate of sexual assault-related ER visits, 2.7 times higher than the Countywide rate⁴. Additionally, in 2023, 27% of reported hate crimes in the County were motivated by sexual orientation or gender⁵.

Awareness of sexual assault and its widespread impact has grown significantly through national and local campaigns, such as *Denim Day*, *Me Too*, and, most recently, *Red Lips, Hoops On: Invincible!* These initiatives have played a crucial role in challenging harmful narratives, supporting survivors, and advocating for systemic change.

Founded by Peace Over Violence's Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Patti Giggins in 1999, *Denim Day* was inspired by an Italian court case in which a rape conviction was overturned under the argument that the victim's tight jeans implied consent. In response, *Denim Day* encourages people to wear jeans in solidarity with survivors and to raise awareness about sexual violence. The *Me Too* Movement, founded by Tarana Burke in 2006, is dedicated to disrupting sexual violence and addressing systemic issues that disproportionately impact marginalized communities, particularly Black women and girls. Locally, the East Los Angeles Women's Center's *Red Lips, Hoops On: Invincible!* campaign challenges stereotypes and cultural myths that normalize sexual violence, using red lipstick and hoop earrings as powerful symbols of empowerment and resistance.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center has designated "*Together We Act, United We Change*," as the theme for SAAM 2025, aligning with efforts to prevent and address sexual violence across the County. The Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), Domestic Violence Council, and Office of Women's Health are working alongside community organizations, service providers, and survivors to expand access to prevention, intervention, and healing services for all County residents.

⁴ Source: California Department of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch. (2023, December 15). EpiCenter: California Injury Data Online. Retrieved September 2024, from <https://skylab4-dev.cdph.ca.gov/epicenter/>.

⁵ Los Angeles County, Human Relations Commission, (2023). LA County Hate Crime Report. https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/20d12b6c-7e71-4244-802a-ce1fe5103c7e/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Addressing sexual violence requires raising awareness and education about sexual assault; expanding access to survivor-centered, trauma-informed services, especially for vulnerable populations; implementing upstream prevention efforts to reduce all forms of sexual violence; and strengthening systems of support to ensure survivors receive comprehensive care.

This year, OVP will launch the County's Sexual Assault Council (SAC), as directed by the Board of Supervisors. The first phase of implementation will focus on partner engagement and the development of a strategic plan. SAC will collaborate with a diverse group of County and community partners, advocates, and survivors to identify key prevention, intervention and healing needs, as well as existing gaps and challenges. These findings will be used to guide SAC's priorities and actions to address systemic barriers to improve service accessibility and delivery for all sexual assault victims/survivors across the County.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim the month of April 2025 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in Los Angeles County (County).
2. Proclaim April 27th, 2025, as Invincible Day in the County and encourage all County residents to learn more about East Los Angeles Women's Center's SAAM "Red Lips, Hoops On: Invincible!" campaign, at <https://www.elawc.org>.⁶
3. Proclaim April 30th, 2025, as Denim Day in the County and encourage all County residents to learn more about the history of Denim Day and how to get involved at <https://denimday.org>.⁷
4. Encourage all County residents to visit <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam>⁸ to learn more about preventing sexual assault, gain access to resources and support, and locate SAAM information and materials.
5. Encourage County department heads, supervisors, and human resources staff to increase their awareness and understanding of sexual violence, including sexual

⁶ <https://www.elawc.org>.

⁷ <https://denimday.org>

⁸ <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam>

assault, and its impact in the workplace to fully support current and prospective employees by visiting <https://rainn.org/>.⁹

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⁹ <https://rainn.org/>