



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, New York State is committed to standing with survivors and combatting sexual violence and all acts of gender-based violence that threaten the safety and well-being of individuals, children, and families; and

Whereas, sexual violence is a dangerous form of abuse that is rooted in power and control, and impacts New Yorkers without regard to age, race or ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or economic, immigration, and housing status; in their lifetime, over half of all women and one in three men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact; and

Whereas, women and minority groups experience a higher incidence of sexual violence, with more than two in five non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native and non-Hispanic multiracial women having been raped in their lifetime; members of the LGBTQ+ community experience sexual violence at a much higher rate than those who identify as heterosexual; and

Whereas, by definition, *sextortion* is when a perpetrator threatens to distribute a victim's private information and/or sensitive material if not provided with images of a sexual nature, sexual favors, or money; perpetrators of sextortion most commonly target minors because of the significant amount of time they spend online and their vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation by adults; and

Whereas, data collected by the FBI shows a 1,000% increase in incidents of financial sextortion, and cited over 7,000 reports of online financial sextortion of minors, 3,000 of whom were as young as eight years old, the majority being boys; and

Whereas, as the only state in the nation to have a cabinet-level state agency dedicated to the issue of domestic and gender-based violence, New York State's Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) is staffed by a team that is committed to the critical work of eradicating gender-based violence, which encompasses acts of domestic and sexual assault; OPDV is working to create a culture free from such violence through its collaborative efforts with all state agencies and stakeholders throughout the state; and

Whereas, with some of the strongest laws in the country protecting sexual assault survivors on college campuses, including the State's "Enough is Enough" legislation, New York has established the nation's most aggressive policies aimed at fighting sexual assault on college and university campuses; and

Whereas, New York State is survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive in its trainings, public awareness campaigns, and overall messaging; through a network of rape crisis and sexual assault advocates, such as the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) and the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, as well as local community-based service programs, our State provides crucial support to survivors and victims, ensuring they receive the help they need; and

Whereas, New York continues to empower survivors of sexual violence by supporting their healing journey, public and private organizations continue working to provide survivors with the best possible services, and we all continue to stand together during this month-long observance to recognize, respect, and remember those lives impacted by this contemptible form of abuse;

Now, Therefore, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim April 2024 as

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the city of Albany on this second day of April in the year two thousand and twenty-four.

Kathy Hochul
Governor

[Signature]
Secretary to the Governor
Karen Persichilli Keogh