



Peace and Justice Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR  
January 26, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Peace and Justice Commission  
Submitted By: Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission  
Subject: Designation of February 2010 as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

RECOMMENDATION

At its special meeting on December 14, 2009, the Peace and Justice Commission unanimously adopted the following recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution designating February 2010 as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.

M/S/C: (Kenin, W./Meola, R.)

Ayes: Bohn, D.; Kenin, W.; Lippman, G.; Maran, R.; Marley, J.; Meola, B.; Nicely, M.; Sherman, M.; Sorgen, P.

Noes: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Brody, D. (excused); Litman, J. (excused); Wornick, J. (excused)

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Consistent with national efforts to address teen dating violence (see Attachment II—Senate Resolution 373, introduced on December 9, 2009), the Peace and Justice Commission, in concert with other City Commissions, encourages the Berkeley City Council and the Berkeley Unified School District to designate February 2010 as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month to raise community awareness about this important issue to ensure the well-being of Berkeley’s young people, particularly teen girls and young women.

BACKGROUND

Research on teen behavior reveals disturbing trends in terms of teen dating violence. National data indicates that 1 in 3 adolescent girls is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth. Further, this type of abuse has been exacerbated by digital technology, resulting in “sexting” where texting messages are used to depict, degrade or otherwise expose young people to the distribution of nude digital images.

This type of abuse places young teen girls and women at-risk of increased substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide and adult re-victimization and decreased school attendance. In addition, physically and sexually abused teens are six times more likely to become pregnant and more than twice as likely to contract and/or transmit sexually-transmitted diseases.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Peace and Justice Commission, consistent with its mandate to promote peace and justice, locally, nationally and internationally, views teen dating violence as a serious issue that the Berkeley City Council, School District, Commissions, community agencies, faith-based organizations and community at-large can successfully address beginning with building community awareness of the issue.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager concurs with the Commission’s recommendation as it is consistent with current City policies and public health and youth programs promoting teen health, wellness and violence prevention.

CONTACT PERSON

Robert Meola, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission, 644-1102  
Wendy, Kenin, Vice Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission  
Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-981-5114

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Senate Resolution 373

RESOLUTION NO. -N.S.

DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 2010 AS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, Berkeley Municipal Code Section 3.68.030, establishing the Peace and Justice Commission, indicates that “peace and justice shall refer to the goal of creating a world community in which the relations between people are based on equality, respect for human rights, and the abhorrence of exploitation and all forms of oppression (Ord. 5705--N.S. #3, 1986)”; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence is a serious and growing problem throughout California and has become a prevalent problem in high schools and middle schools; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence is a pattern of controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior over another in a relationship. It can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of any of those; and

WHEREAS, victims of teen dating violence can be females or males; and

WHEREAS, one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship and has feared for his/her physical safety; and

WHEREAS, one in five teenagers in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped, or pushed by a partner; and

WHEREAS, one in four girls who have been in a relationship report having been pressured to have sex or to engage in sexual activities that they did not want; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have shown that teen dating violence is starting at an earlier age with 11 to 14 year olds able to identify aspects of teen dating abuse in their social lives; and

WHEREAS, a majority of parents surveyed either believe dating violence is not an issue or admit they do not know if it is an issue; and

WHEREAS, involvement in violent relationships during the adolescent years can have serious ramifications for victims, putting them at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide, and adult re-victimization; and

WHEREAS, the severity of violence between intimate partners has been observed to be greater in cases in which a pattern of violence has been established in adolescence; and

WHEREAS, teenagers deserve to be in a relationship free of the fear of violence. They have a right to have safe relationships.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council hereby designates February 2010 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness And Prevention Month and urges all citizens to actively participate in the efforts to end violence in our homes, in our schools and in our communities. A record signature copy of said Resolution to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 373—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2010 AS “NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH”

Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 373

Whereas dating, domestic, and sexual violence affect women regardless of their age, and teens and young women are especially vulnerable;

Whereas, approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth;

Whereas nationwide, 1 in 10 high school students (9.9 percent) has been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend;

Whereas more than 1 in 4 teenagers have been in a relationship where a partner is verbally abusive;

Whereas 20 percent of teen girls exposed to physical dating violence did not attend school because the teen girls felt unsafe either at school, or on the way to or from school, on 1 or more occasions in a 30-day period;

Whereas violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications for victims by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide, and adult revictimization;

Whereas being physically and sexually abused leaves teen girls up to 6 times more likely to become pregnant and more than 2 times as likely to report a sexually transmitted disease;

Whereas nearly 3 in 4 children ages 11 to 14 (referred to in this preamble as “tweens”), say that dating relationships usually begin at age 14 or younger and about 72 percent of eighth and ninth graders report “dating”;

Whereas 1 in 5 tweens say their friends are victims of dating violence and nearly ½ of tweens who are in relationships know friends who are verbally abused;

Whereas more than 3 times as many tweens (20 percent) as parents of tweens (6 percent) admit that parents know little or nothing about the dating relationships of tweens;

Whereas teen dating abuse most often takes place in the home of 1 of the partners;

Whereas a majority of parents surveyed believe they have had a conversation with their teen about what it means to be in a healthy relationship, but the majority of teens surveyed said that they have not had a conversation about dating abuse with a parent in the past year;

Whereas digital abuse and “sexting” is becoming a new frontier for teen dating abuse;

Whereas 1 in 4 teens in a relationship say they have been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner through cellphones and texting;

Whereas 3 in 10 young people have sent or received nude pictures of other young people

on their cell or online, and 61 percent who have “sexted” report being pressured to do so at least once;

Whereas targets of digital abuse are almost 3 times as likely to contemplate suicide as those who haven't encountered such abuse (8 percent vs. 3 percent), and targets of digital abuse are nearly 3 times more likely to have considered dropping out of school;

Whereas the severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to be greater in cases where the pattern of violence has been established in adolescence;

Whereas primary prevention programs are a key part of addressing teen dating violence and many successful community examples include education, community outreach, and social marketing campaigns that also understand the cultural appropriateness of programs;

Whereas skilled assessment and intervention programs are also necessary for youth victims and abusers; and

Whereas the establishment of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month will benefit schools, communities, and families regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or sex: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of February 2010, as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”;

(2) supports communities to empower teens to develop healthier relationships; and

(3) calls upon the people of the United States, including youth and parents, schools, law enforcement, State and local officials, and interested groups to observe National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month with appropriate programs and activities that promote awareness and prevention of the crime of teen dating violence in their communities.

