

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2023 AS SEXUAL
ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, sexual assault affects all communities in Maine and people of all races, genders and economic backgrounds, and over 14,000 people in Maine are sexually assaulted each year and one in 5 Maine citizens will experience sexual violence in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, the effects of sexual violence have wide-ranging public health ramifications and societal costs, and survivors and their loved ones can experience consequences including mental health crises, substance use disorder, homelessness, lost wages and health care costs, among others; and

WHEREAS, sexual violence affects certain groups more often, and that disproportionate impact is related to historical experiences of marginalization and oppression, providing the evidence that sexual assault is a tool of control and power; and

WHEREAS, systems of support for survivors of sexual assault often have inadequate resources, do not provide adequate options for justice and healing and retraumatize survivors; and

WHEREAS, widespread stigma and misconceptions around sexual violence result in low rates of reporting of crimes, increased isolation and shame for victims and the continuation of cultures of violence; and

WHEREAS, raising awareness in our communities about the causes of and solutions to sexual violence can lead to long-term positive cultural and systemic changes, and building a future free from sexual violence requires us to commit to making those changes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize April 2023 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and to express our support for and encouragement of all those affected by sexual violence; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault as a token of our respect and support.