
For Immediate Release

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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Topeka, KS, 4/18/2013 – April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and this April, communities across the country are standing with survivors to say No More – no more sexual violence in our community.

In his [Sexual Assault Awareness Month proclamation](#), Gov. Sam Brownback states that “with leadership, dedication and encouragement, there is evidence that we can be successful in preventing sexual violence in Kansas through increased education, awareness and community involvement.” Gov. Brownback “encourages all citizens to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that promote awareness and prevention of the crime of sexual assault.”

A highlight of the progress being made in Kansas came on April 1, when Gov. Brownback signed into law a bill that was passed unanimously by both houses of the Kansas Legislature. The legislation eliminates the statute of limitations for prosecution of rape and aggravated criminal sodomy. It places rape and aggravated criminal sodomy in the same category as murder, terrorism and illegal use of weapons of mass destruction, none of which have a statute of limitations for prosecution in Kansas. Before signing this change into law, prosecutors were barred from prosecuting rapes more than 5 years after the date of the rape, even when a suspect was identified and prosecutors had strong evidence.

While we have much to celebrate this April, we also recognize that we have a long way to go in ending this epidemic.

According to the Kansas Youth Risk Behavior Survey, more than 11,000 Kansas high school students in 2011 reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to have sex. That is enough rape victims to fill almost 230 school buses – and that is only the high school students.

Additionally, each year, sexual assault programs in Kansas provide services to more than 3,500 victims and answer more than 1,500 sexual assault-related hotline calls.

Given the staggering numbers, it is concerning that in 2011 there were 1,103 rapes reported to Kansas law enforcement, according to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation’s annual report. Of those 1,103 reports, 78 percent of the victims knew their perpetrators, yet only 25 percent of reports resulted in an arrest.

The first step to address this epidemic is to learn more about the realities of sexual assault in Kansas and to find ways that you can be a part of the solution. You are invited to visit our newly redesigned website, kcsdv.org, where you can [learn more](#) about the realities survivors face, and explore [what you can do](#) to prevent and eliminate sexual violence in Kansas, including attending one of the [many events](#) hosted by local programs.

“I hope Kansans all across the state will participate in local community activities that bring awareness to the issue of sexual violence,” said KCSDV Executive Director Joyce Grover. “Join the conversation!”

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at www.kcsdv.org.