



Department of Public Safety

COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE &
SEXUAL ASSAULT
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Director Lauree Morton Remarks at Juneau's Choose Respect March on 3/26/15

Thank you to Governor Walker for speaking and marching with us today. I appreciate your commitment to improving safety for victims and to ending these crimes in our state. Thank you to everyone who marched. We gain strength from gatherings like the March and the One Billion Rising event last month—it is good to look around us and know that we are not alone in the work to end domestic violence and sexual assault.

2015 marks the fifth year of the Choose Respect Marches. It also marks the fifth year of the Alaska Victimization Survey. We will resurvey women across the state this spring and while we don't expect to see a difference in the lifetime estimates—we are hopeful that past year estimates will show improvement. I thank each woman who takes the survey. Women who are surveyed relive horrendous experiences so that we have better opportunity to understand these crimes. Women who have commented on the survey process say they take the survey with the hope that their information may be used to prevent any other person from suffering. They provide an invaluable contribution to the difference we are making.

One out of every 55 women in Juneau suffer these crimes, this should not fill us with hopelessness, rather it is a clarion call—to action, to join stand up in our spheres of influence and say no more.

Our strategy to infuse comprehensive consistent prevention programming throughout Alaska is gaining international recognition. As some of you know, last

week I was at the United Nations presenting information on Alaska's programs to engage men and boys in our efforts to create peace in intimate relationships and communities. The Council's Chair, the Reverend Richard Irwin, also spoke at the UN Conference on the Status of Women. He talked about the Council's efforts to engage faith communities in our work of increasing victim safety and holding offenders accountable for their actions.

From the world stage to local community supports, Alaskans are joining together, calling one another to Choose Respect. This Saturday, six young people from Juneau Douglas and Thunder Mountain high schools will be honored in Anchorage at the 2015 Spirit of Youth Awards. In its 17th year, the Spirit of Youth organization highlights youths' accomplishments across the state. Analia Castaneda-Felipe, Korbyn Powers, Deanna Hobbs, Justin Sleppy, Addisohn Jones and Calvin Zuelow will receive the Service to Peers award for their participation in Juneau's LeadOn! Digital Storytellers. They created a short film promoting healthy relationships, healthy sexuality and nonviolence which has been widely viewed on YouTube and seen by high school health teachers and students across the state.

This year's campaign theme "Together We Can Make a Difference" weaves comprehensive statewide efforts such as Girls on the Run, Coaching Boys into Men, Lead On! for Peace and Equality, COMPASS, Green Dot Alaska, Talk Now Talk Often, and the Fourth R, together with local community projects to prevent violence. Strands of hope, strands of commitment, strands of challenge, of change are combining to strengthen our resolve.

I want us to leave the March with hope today. Good, necessary work is being done to create communities where respectful relationships are the norm, not the anomaly. Thank you to everyone here today that participates in the work to make Choose Respect a reality. We can make the end of this March, the beginning of a new day in Juneau. Let's leave today determined to carry hope forward—I believe together we can make a difference. Thank you.