

# **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

**Effective Date: Friday, February 14th, 2014**

WHEREAS, every Alaskan has the right to live free from fear and harm; and

WHEREAS, sexual assault and other abuse violate an individual's dignity, security, trust, and privacy and affects men, women, and children from all backgrounds across Alaska; and

WHEREAS, nationally, 19 percent of women and six percent of men have reported experiencing forced sex at some point in their lifetime. In Alaska, 37 percent of women have experienced sexual violence within their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, victims of sexual assault commonly endure lasting emotional, physical, and psychological scars, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse issues, phobias, heightened emotional reactions, interpersonal relationship issues, low self-esteem, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, anxiety, and many more; and

WHEREAS, people who sexually abuse children can be found in families, schools, churches, recreation centers, youth sports leagues, places of worship, and other places children gather. Approximately 90 percent of victims of child sexual abuse know their abuser; and

WHEREAS, with leadership, dedication, and encouragement, there is compelling evidence that we can successfully reduce sexual violence in Alaska through prevention, education, increased awareness, and holding perpetrators accountable for acts of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, all Alaskans should report suspicions of child sexual abuse and be willing to intervene before, during, or after a situation when they observe behaviors that promote sexual violence. One safe, supportive adult can make all the difference in the life of a victim of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is committed to prevention, increasing law enforcement's presence in our communities, and support for victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, our state and people intend to make a difference by working for the day when all Alaskans will be free of sexual assault.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim April 2014 as:

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in Alaska, and ask that all Alaskans join with me to stand against sexual assault in our homes and communities, and to offer support to victims and survivors. Together, we can choose respect and dignity for our people while ending the cycle of violence and bring hope to all Alaskans.

Dated: February 11, 2014