



WomanView

Volume 12, Issue 7

January 28, 2009

National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week, February 2–6, 2009

The occurrence of teen dating violence is staggering—13 percent of teenage girls who said they had been in a relationship report being physically hurt or hit, and 26 percent report enduring repeated verbal abuse. Even more alarming is that 81 percent of parents surveyed believe that teen dating violence is not an issue or admit that they do not know if it is an issue. A majority of parents (54 percent) surveyed admit that they have not discussed dating violence with their teen. Yet ensuring that students and their parents are aware of the prevalence and warning signs of teen dating violence is a critical component of any effort to eradicate dating violence among this population.

In an effort to raise awareness, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed Resolution 710 (available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>) designating the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week.” This marks the fourth consecutive year that, demonstrating its commitment to the issue of teen dating violence, the Senate has declared the first week in February as a time to highlight this issue. In adopting the resolution, the Senate recognizes that

- One in five teenagers between the ages of 13 and 14 says that their friends are victims of dating violence;
- 69 percent of all teenagers who had sex by age 14 said that they had experienced one or more types of abuse in a dating relationship; and
- 30 percent of teenagers in a dating relationship have been text-messaged 10, 20, or 30 times per hour by a partner attempting to find out where they are, what they are doing, or with whom they are.

Public Hearing to Address Teen Dating Violence, Pregnancy, and Parenthood as Barriers to Education

“National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week” is a time for advocates, state and local government, law enforcement, educators, and other interested parties to engage in activities and programs to bring necessary attention to this issue. At the Shriver Center, the Women’s Law and Policy Project will be participating in the Ensuring Success in School Task Force public hearing on February 2, 2009, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The [Ensuring Success in School Task Force](#) was created by the Illinois legislature to deal with the problems faced by elementary and secondary students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence.

The task force has been holding public hearings throughout Illinois to gain insight and perspective on the problems that these students face when attempting to complete their education safely and successfully. Because the task force understands that systems can change only when informed individuals speak out about their experiences, the task force is seeking testimony from students and their parents, advocates, educators, and any other interested parties for the upcoming Chicago hearing. From the hearings, the task force will draft for the Illinois General Assembly a report detailing the task force’s findings, recommendations, and model policies, procedures, and protocols to be implemented in school districts throughout Illinois.

The task force is sensitive to the need for confidentiality by persons who are interested in giving input into the task force’s findings and recommendations. If you or your friends and acquaintances are interested in participating in the Chicago hearing, have questions about the hearing, would like to testify at the hearing, or would like to discuss further ways to give testimony or other input, contact Wendy Pollack, Shriver Center, 312.263.3830 ext. 238, wendypollack@povertylaw.org, or Michaella Furman, Shriver Center, 312.263.3830 ext. 243, michaellafurman@povertylaw.org. You may also visit our website, <http://www.povertylaw.org/news-and-events/events/essa-task-force>, for additional resources, including guidelines for testimony and information for students and educators about the hearing, or to register for the hearing.

If someone you know is in an abusive relationship, help is available through the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, 866.331.9474 or 866.331.8453 (TTY), a 24-hour phone line for one-on-one counseling services and resources for teens, 13–18, who are experiencing dating abuse. Teenagers can also contact the National Domestic Violence hotline 800.799.7233 or 800.787.3224 (TTY). Also, visit Liz Claiborne’s [Love Is Not Abuse website](#) for additional information and fact sheets on teen dating violence and abuse.

For more information, contact [Wendy Pollack](#), director, Women’s Law and Policy Project, Shriver Center, 312.263.3830 ext. 238, wendypollack@povertylaw.org.

Published by the SARGENT SHRIVER NATIONAL CENTER ON POVERTY LAW. Funded in part by generous grants from the Chicago Foundation for Women and the Jo & Art Moore Family Fund.