

Rep. Foster offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 80.

A resolution to declare April 17, 2013, as Native American Sexual Assault Awareness Day in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Sexual assault is a serious and pervasive public health, human rights, and social justice issue affecting 1.3 million women in the United States. Sexual violence affects Americans of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances. In Michigan alone, an average of 16,000 women, children and men received services as victims in relation to the crime of sexual assault and/or rape; and

Whereas, No one is more vulnerable than Native American women, who are 3.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women of other races. National statistics show one in three Native women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Yet, it is widely understood to be the most underreported crime in America; and

Whereas, Exposure to violence, whether physical or sexual, places our young men and women in danger of long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Depression, fear, and suicidal feelings have been experienced by survivors of this crime. Children who experience violence are at a higher risk for failure in school, emotional and substance abuse disorders, and are more likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence themselves later in life; and

Whereas, Ending sexual violence will require the collaborative efforts of everyone, including law enforcement, criminal justice system, public health officials, and community members. It will require that everyone communicate a universal message that violence of any nature, and especially sexual violence, is unacceptable; and

Whereas, We call upon all organizations, both tribal and non-tribal; law enforcement, health officials, and community members to speak out against sexual assault and support local efforts in Native American country to help victims find the healing they seek; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare April 17, 2013, as Native American Sexual Assault Awareness Day in the state of Michigan. We recognize sexual violence victims and those who serve them during the entire month of April and stand united in our commitment to end all forms of sexual assault and intimate partner violence in our state.