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## **SENATORS ANNOUNCE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK**

*Senators Crapo, Clinton, Biden and Whitehouse call for national awareness  
during first full week of February*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In an annual effort to raise awareness of the crime of teen dating violence nationwide, Senators Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-New York), Joe Biden (D-Delaware) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island) joined together to announce February 4 – 8, 2008, “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week,” as declared by S. Res. 388, which passed the full Senate in December. This marks the third year that the United States Senate has declared the first full week in February a time to encourage local, state and national organizations, governments and private industry to call attention to the tragedy and pervasiveness of teen dating violence in our communities.

“Dating violence has been shown to be a precursor to adult domestic violence; it is a cruel reality for many American teens,” said Crapo. “We must teach our children what it means to have healthy relationships free from harassment, fear and physical and emotional abuse. This annual effort helps communities across the nation raise awareness of the destructive and sometimes fatal dating relationships of our teens, and promotes prevention of this violence. I’m honored to have spearheaded efforts to raise awareness here in the United States Senate, and I want to thank my Senate colleagues and all of our Initiative Partners for their ongoing support and outreach.”

“We know that too often teen dating violence is a part of physical and emotional abuse. By declaring “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week,” we send a clear message to teens: abuse is never acceptable. I’m proud to once again join Senator Crapo, our colleagues and all of our Initiative Partners in continuing the fight to raise awareness about this critical issue that affects so many teens across our nation. Our work is far from over to protect every woman, man and child from domestic violence and I will continue to work towards increased funding and stronger policies to break this dangerous cycle,” said Clinton.

“Over the past decade we’ve made tremendous progress on transforming society’s understanding that domestic violence is a crime; more women are stepping forward to report abuse and get the services they need. Today’s young people need to hear those same messages and access age-

appropriate services in our schools, courtrooms and community centers. It is critical that we guide our teenagers towards respectful relationships, and learn to expect nothing less than violence-free lives,” said Biden, author of the landmark 1994 Violence Against Women Act.

“In 2005, Chris and Anna Burke of Rhode Island lost their daughter Lindsay to dating violence. They have transformed a terrible tragedy into powerful advocacy, in hopes that what happened to their family will never happen again,” said Whitehouse, a former state and federal prosecutor. “I’m proud to support their efforts, and to join Senator Crapo and our colleagues to make it clear that violence in teenage relationships is a dangerous and widespread problem in our country.”

The crime of teen dating violence, including physical, emotional and sexual assault, and harassment via texting, email or Instant Messaging is a reality for many American teenagers. Like drug abuse, it’s a reality of which many parents are unaware.

- One in three female teens in a dating relationship report having feared for their safety.
- 30% of teens in a dating relationship have been text-messaged 10, 20, or 30 times an hour by a partner finding out where they are, what they are doing or who they are with.
- One in five teens in a serious relationship report having been hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.
- One in four girls in a relationship report having been pressured to go further sexually than they really wanted.

The Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Initiative was started by teens through the American Bar Association in 2004. In 2006, the first national “week” was declared by Congress and was declared in 2007 as well. Both years, a number of governors declared proclamations, and today, the Initiative includes over 45 national, state and local agencies and organizations as partners. Every year, a number of governors also issue proclamations recognizing the week.

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