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Sexual Assault Awareness Resolution Approved by the House

On April 23, the House approved, 410-0, a resolution (H. Res. 289) designed to raise awareness and encourage prevention of sexual assault in the United States, and to support the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Sponsored by Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA), the resolution contains a number of findings, including:

- one in six women and one in 33 men have been victims of rape or attempted rape;
- children and young adults are most at risk, as 44 percent of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18, and 80 percent are under the age of 30;
- prevention education programs carried out by rape crisis and women's health centers have the potential to reduce the prevalence of sexual assault in their communities; and
- aggressive prosecution can incarcerate rapists and therefore prevent them from committing further crimes.

“Sexual violence is an epidemic in this country, it is a threat to our public health and our public safety that demands our attention,” said Rep. Moran. He continued, “One in six women and one in 33 men in the United States will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime. This is the highest rate of any country publishing statistics on sexual assault. A woman is raped in this country every two and a half minutes. We must do more to stop that. Responding to sexual assault must start with prevention... A study of American high school students found that the majority of girls

and three-quarters of boys thought that forced sex was acceptable under some circumstances, including when a woman had had past sexual experiences or when a boy spent a lot of money on the girl... We must begin with prevention, because the consequences of sexual violence are so severe and because it is a crime whose impact is felt disproportionately by those least able to protect themselves: the young, the disabled, the impoverished.”

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) said, “The emotional and physical scars from sexual assaults exact a terrible toll on our loved ones, our families, our communities, and our country. In my view, we can and we must do better. We have made important strides in this battle. We have expanded the use of DNA to solve sexual assault crimes, reduced the backlog in the testing of rape cases, and solved more sexual assault crimes, and ensuring that those who commit these heinous offenses are put behind bars...Madam Speaker, this resolution recognizes the important role that awareness and prevention can play in reducing the incidence of sexual assault. The crime of sexual assault is so hurtful and so tragic; we must redouble our efforts and make sure that we use every tool at our disposal to protect everyone from this horrible crime. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.”