



Proclamation

WHEREAS, California is committed to the well-being and protection of our youth, the safety of our communities, and to fostering a society based upon respect for one another- and where violence has no role; teen dating violence, and its various forms of control and abuse, is a serious crime that can continue into adulthood, with the potential to destroy lives; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence involves physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, economic or other abusive behavior- including harassment and cyberbullying via texting, "sexting", emailing, instant messaging or posting on social media- and is committed by a person intending to harm, threaten, intimidate, harass, control, isolate, or monitor another person with whom they have or have had a dating relationship; and

WHEREAS, dating violence can have long-term consequences on health throughout life, as teens who are victims are more likely to be depressed, have eating disorders, do poorly in school, engage in unhealthy behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, and think about or attempt suicide; and

WHEREAS, national studies on this issue indicate approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls, or 1.5 million high schoolers, experience some form of interpersonal violence; 25% of 8th and 9th graders are victims of dating violence and 62% of young teens- ages 11-14 years report knowing friends who have been verbally abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend and only 33% tell anyone; and

WHEREAS, California has focused on the teen dating violence issues through effective measures and actions, including a teen-focused dating abuse and healthy relationship website, social media initiative, and public awareness campaigns such as Loveisrespect.org;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MATTHEW SERRATTO, Mayor of the City of Merced, on behalf of the City Council hereby proclaim month of February 2024, as "Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month" and urge(s) all citizens of Merced to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in observance.

Signed this 20th day of February 2024.

Matthew Serratto, Mayor of Merced