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By:  Hinojosa H.R. No. 681

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, The observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April 2023 provides a fitting opportunity to recognize SAFE for its outstanding work in Central Texas; and

WHEREAS, A nonprofit organization, SAFE is dedicated to providing safety, stability, and healing to anyone who has experienced violence and abuse, including survivors of sexual assault, trafficking, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect; it offers a round-the-clock helpline, shelter and housing to escape immediate risk, and a charter school that is a secure place for daycare and education; in addition, it encompasses an on-site sexual assault clinic; among other initiatives, it sponsors a dedicated program for survivors of sex trafficking as well as prevention programs to empower people to choose healthy relationships; and

WHEREAS, SAFE traces its origins back some 45 years, when the Austin Rape Crisis Center and the Center for Battered Women were founded; as those agencies expanded their services, they joined forces in 1998 to establish SafePlace; its mission dovetailed with that of the Austin Children's Shelter, and in more recent years, the organizations merged into SAFE to better address the complex issues of violence and abuse; today, SAFE has an annual budget of more than $20 million, over 350 employees, and thousands of volunteers; its prevention and crisis programs operate across multiple campuses and in schools, hospitals, courts, and county offices; and

WHEREAS, During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, SAFE is hosting an exhibition titled "What Was I Wearing" to challenge the belief that the clothes a person wears determine their likelihood of experiencing a sexual assault; outfits displayed are accompanied by the stories of survivors, conveying the message that sexual assault is always the sole fault of the perpetrator, not the person who suffered harm; and

WHEREAS, Sexual Assault Awareness Month highlights the accomplishments of a movement that has effected positive change, including passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 1993, while reminding the public that sexual assault, harassment, and abuse remain far too prevalent in our society; through the tireless endeavors of its staff and volunteers, SAFE exemplifies the progress the movement has achieved and the commitment to ending the cycle of violence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas Legislature hereby honor SAFE on the occasion of Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2023 and extend to all those associated with the organization sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for SAFE as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.