

A PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF WASHTENAW COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE
START BY BELIEVING CAMPAIGN AND DECLARING WASHTENAW COUNTY A
"START BY BELIEVING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT" COUNTY

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 6, 2016

WHEREAS, the citizens of Washtenaw County share a critical concern for survivors of sexual violence and a desire to support their need for justice and healing; and

WHEREAS, for the citizens of Washtenaw County, the lifetime prevalence of sexual assaults against women is one in four, and against men, one in twenty; each of these is a survivor who should be supported; and

WHEREAS, Washtenaw County is comparable to national estimates in that less than twenty percent of sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement and less than three percent of reports will result in the conviction and incarceration of the perpetrator, and

WHEREAS, service providers throughout Washtenaw County recognize that survivors are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member or community professional and when these loved ones respond with doubt, shame or blame, survivors suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being; and

WHEREAS, the "Start by Believing" public awareness campaign, a program developed by End Violence Against Women International, is being implemented in communities and states across the nation, and is now being introduced throughout Michigan; and

WHEREAS, we know that if we improve the responses of friends, family members and community professionals when survivors report sexual assaults, more survivors will seek out resources and move forward in their lives;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby declares Washtenaw County as a "Start by Believing Survivors of Sexual Assault" County and challenges others within our community to advocate as well. Together, we can all make a personal difference for those who come forward and speak out about their sexual assault.

Felicia Brabec, Washtenaw County Commissioner
District 4
Chair of the Board of Commissioners