



PROCLAMATION

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October 2021

“Healing Forward”

WHEREAS, Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior that one intimate partner - current or former - uses to gain and maintain control over another. This abuse can occur in the form of physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and economic control. Batterers often use multiple tactics such as isolation, intimidation, sexual and physical assault, forced substance abuse, insults, threatening, and excessive monitoring to control and manipulate victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, Victims and survivors often describe the abuse as being part of a cycle or pattern where there are periods of calm followed by periods of fear and tension leading to incidents of abuse. This cycle and many other reasons make it difficult and dangerous for victims and survivors to leave abusive relationships. In fact, domestic violence homicides most commonly occur when a victim or survivor is leaving or has recently left an abusive relationship; and

WHEREAS, While women make up the largest group of those who report domestic violence, it can happen to anyone. Domestic violence affects millions across the U.S. and the CNMI regardless of cultural background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, socioeconomic status, ability, or educational background. This means it is very likely we all know someone who is a victim or survivor, and someone who is an abuser; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of cases of domestic violence still go unreported. The unique challenges of living in a pandemic has also made it more difficult for victims and survivors to get help and services, or to connect with support systems. Additionally, the pandemic has caused this crime to become even more hidden, leaving victims to suffer silently in places where others consider the safest – their home, work, or school; and

WHEREAS, Victims and survivors need comprehensive services, but more so, genuine and non-judgmental support from friends, family, and our community. While people may feel the need to "rescue" a victim or survivor living with domestic violence, it may not always be the safest approach or the most empowering approach. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, abuse is about power and control, so one of the most important ways to help a person in an abusive relationship is to consider how to empower them to make their own decisions; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence is never the fault of victims and survivors. While anger, stress, or substance abuse can be common elements in abusive relationships, using violence is still a deliberate choice made by batterers. Abuse is used to control victims and survivors, and to take away their agency over their own lives; and

WHEREAS, All of us have the ability to empower victims and survivors by offering resources like calling the Karidat Victim Hotline number at 234-5100, listening without judgement, and reminding them that they are not alone. You can learn more about supporting victims and survivors by calling the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence at 234-3878, and visiting the National Domestic Violence Hotline website at www.thehotline.org.

WHEREAS, The severity of domestic violence calls for enhanced prevention strategies, as well as strengthened intervention efforts that include employing a variety of community-based and public resources to support law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocacy, secure shelters, batterer's intervention, other support services, and policy development; and

WHEREAS, Education and awareness are also critical components of the effort to end domestic violence in the CNMI. As such, we proclaim October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, nationally and locally, every year. The purpose of DVAM is to mourn for those whose lives were taken by those who use violence in relationships, celebrate the tremendous progress victim advocates have made over the years, and connect with one another with a true sense of unity to end domestic violence; and


WHEREAS, The theme for the DVAM 2021 campaign in the CNMI is “**Healing Forward.**” Despite the added trauma and crisis from the pandemic, survivors are still bravely working for their survival and healing. This theme recognizes their fortitude and how much they still need healing moving forward. It also calls on us to take an active role in helping survivors heal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RALPH DLG. TORRES, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and **I, ARNOLD I. PALACIOS**, Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in us by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth, do hereby proclaim **October 2021** as

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

We call on all citizens and communities to join the movement to end domestic violence by participating in Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic violence is never the fault of victims and survivors, so we must do our part as leaders and as a community to support them. Let us help the survivors truly heal forward and come together as a community to end this abusive behavior.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands on this
4th day of October 2021.



RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor



ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Lieutenant Governor