

# Proclamation

## by Governor Jim Justice

- Whereas,** the State of West Virginia shares a critical concern for victims of sexual violence and a desire to support their needs for justice and healing; and
- Whereas,** in 2023 CONACT Rape Crisis Center served the needs of 741 victims by providing 4,243 services including crisis interventions, peer counseling sessions, and forensic exams, law enforcement interviews, or other proceedings; and
- Whereas,** current estimates suggest as few as 1 in 5 sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement and less than 3 percent will result in the conviction and incarceration of the perpetrator; and
- Whereas,** research documents that victims are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member, and when these loved ones respond with doubt, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being; and
- Whereas,** the Start by Believing public awareness campaign (a program of End Violence Against Women International) is designed to improve the responses of friends, family members, and community professionals, so they can help victims to access supportive resources and engage the criminal justice system.

**Now, Therefore,** Be it Resolved that I, Jim Justice, Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim the month of *April 3, 2024* as:

### *Start By Believing Day*

and proclaim *April 2024* as:

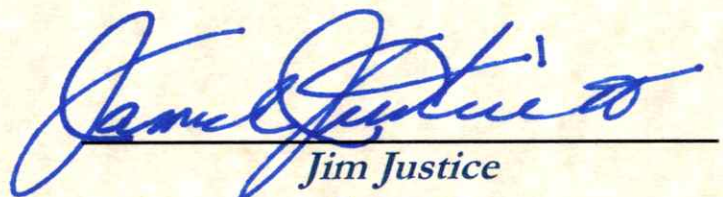
### *Sexual Assault Awareness Month*

in the Mountain State and encourage all citizens to join me in this observance.

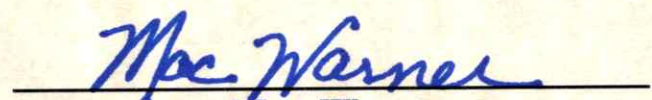
**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

**Done** at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Twenty-Fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Four, and in the One Hundred Sixty-First year of the State.



  
Jim Justice  
Governor

By the Governor:

  
Mac Warner  
Secretary of State