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**SENATE DECLARES FEBRUARY 2 – 6, 2009 “NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK”**

***S. Res. 710 passes by Unanimous Consent***

WASHINGTON, D.C.— In the final hour of the 110th Congress last night a resolution declaring February 2 – 6, 2009, “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week,” passed the Senate by Unanimous Consent.  Idaho Senator Mike Crapo, who introduced the measure, was joined by his colleagues, Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-New York), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Joe Lieberman (ID-CT), Charles Schumer (D-New York) and Evan Bayh (D-IN), who introduced the resolution with him in November.  This marks the fourth year that the United States Senate has introduced a resolution declaring the first full week in February as a time to encourage local, state and national organizations, governments and private industry to call attention to the tragedy and pervasiveness of teen dating violence in communities nationwide.

“Dating violence has been shown to be a precursor to adult domestic violence; it is a cruel reality for many American teens,” said Crapo.  “We must teach our children what it means to have healthy relationships free from harassment, fear and physical and emotional abuse.  This annual effort helps communities across the nation raise awareness of the destructive and sometimes fatal dating relationships of our teens, and promotes prevention of this violence.  I’m honored to have spearheaded efforts to raise awareness here in the United States Senate, and I want to thank my Senate colleagues and our more than 50 national, state and local Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Initiative partners for their ongoing support and outreach.”

“I’m proud to once again join Senator Crapo, our colleagues and all of our Initiative Partners to continue our efforts to raise awareness about the tragedy of teen dating abuse and violence,” said Clinton. “Declaring “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week” and providing education on this issue for teens are critical steps towards breaking this dangerous cycle. We must teach youth everywhere that abuse- be it emotional or physical- is never acceptable. Our work is far from over to protect every woman, man and child from domestic violence.”

“Teen dating violence, which unfortunately is on the rise in Alaska, must be addressed,” said Murkowski.  “It is important that we raise awareness of the problem and teach adolescents that mutual respect is a hallmark of any healthy relationship.  Youth must understand that harassment or abuse of any sort is simply unacceptable.”

“Teen dating violence is a serious problem in Connecticut and the Nation.  We can come closer to breaking the cycle of domestic violence by raising awareness and teaching today’s children to develop healthy relationships,” said Senator Lieberman.  “It is my hope that more potential victims are spared with each year we recognize National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week.”

**“It is absolutely necessary for us to bring national attention to a serious issue that affects so many young Americans,” Schumer said. “**Teens must become aware of dating violence and learn what constitutes a healthy relationship and what constitutes an unhealthy relationship. I am very proud to have joined my Senate colleagues in declaring National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week.”

“Teenagers in violent relationships are at far higher risk of engaging in dangerous behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse,” Bayh said. “Young people deserve the support of caring, compassionate adults they can turn to in a time of crisis. National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week deserves credit for bringing this serious issue to light. An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure when it comes to the safety of our children.”

The crime of teen dating violence, including physical, emotional and sexual assault, and harassment via texting, email or Instant Messaging is a reality for many American teenagers.

* One in eleven adolescents reports being a victim of physical dating violence.
* 30 percent of teens in a dating relationship have been text-messaged 10, 20, or 30 times an hour by a partner finding out where they are, what they are doing or who they are with.
* One in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.
* 29 percent of girls in a relationship report having been pressured to go further sexually than they really wanted.

The Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Initiative was started by teens through the American Bar Association in 2004.  In 2006, the first national “week” was declared by Congress, and has been recognized every year since then.  Since its inception, a number of governors have declared proclamations, and today, the Initiative includes over 50 national, state and local agencies and organizations as partners.  More information can be found at:  <http://crapo.senate.gov/issues/teen_dating_violence.cfm>

To directly link to this news release, please use the following address: <http://crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release_full.cfm?id=305863>

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