

Proclamation

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month February 2026

WHEREAS, teen dating violence remains a serious public health issue in the United States, with approximately 1 in 3 adolescents experiencing physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a rate that continues to exceed victimization rates of other types of youth violence; and 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner each year; and

WHEREAS, about 1 in 10 high school students report being purposefully hit, slapped, or physically harmed by a dating partner, with emotional and digital abuse increasingly common among teens; and

WHEREAS, high school students who experience physical or emotional violence in dating relationships are significantly more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, including substance use and risky sexual behavior, face increased risk of depression and suicide, and may carry patterns of abuse into future relationships; and

WHEREAS, teens victimized by a dating partner often experience disrupted development of self-esteem and body image, report school absence or unsafe feelings due to abuse, and may suffer long-lasting psychological trauma; and

WHEREAS, reporting rates remain alarmingly low with only about 1 in 10 teens disclosing abuse to an adult and the large majority suffering in silence, highlighting the hidden nature of teen dating violence and the urgent need for awareness and support from families, schools, and communities; and

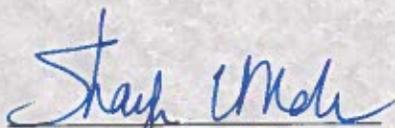
WHEREAS, research indicates that a substantial proportion of parents either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or are unsure if it is, underscoring the need for broader education on recognizing abuse and fostering healthy relationships; and

WHEREAS, by providing young people, parents, educators, and professionals with education about healthy relationships, warning signs of abuse, respectful communication skills, and resources for support, and by challenging social attitudes that tolerate violence, we recognize that teen dating violence is preventable with proactive effort and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas calls on all of Abilene to work together to end teen dating violence by empowering young people to build healthy relationship skills, assisting victims in accessing resources and supportive services, expanding community awareness and prevention strategies, instituting effective intervention policies in schools, and encouraging open dialogue among families and peers; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the City of Abilene Commission hereby designates February 2026 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and urges all citizens to recognize, support, and assist all those who serve the rights and needs of victims of teen dating violence, and to promote healthy, respectful relationships throughout our community.

(ATTEST)



Shayla L. Mohr, CMC, City Clerk



Brandon Rein, Mayor