

## Recognizing Denim Day in NJ 2008

### Statement Recognizing Denim Day in NJ 2008

On April 28, 2008, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) issued the following statement to be entered into the official Congressional Record.

"Madame Speaker, I rise to support the efforts of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Bergen County Rape Crisis Center to designate April 28, 2008 as Denim Day in New Jersey. This day-long observance is an important opportunity to raise awareness about sexual violence and end the 'blame-the-victim' mentality about rape that continues to impede justice for those attacked.

"Unfortunately, appalling misconceptions about rape and sexual violence still exist and were on full display in the Italian Supreme Court decision that launched International Denim Day in 1998. In that case, the justices overturned a rape conviction because the woman wore jeans. They reasoned that the victim must have helped her attacker remove her jeans because they were "tight," thereby implying her consent. After the decision, women in the Italian Parliament protested by wearing jeans to work the next day.

"Those Italian legislators were right to protest such an awful decision and inspired people around the world to speak out against similar injustices. We must do everything possible as a community and as a nation of laws to stop rape and sexual assault and help survivors. That includes educating young men and women about consent, making clear that rape is the responsibility of the offender, not the victim, and eliminating the fear of shame and blame that prevents an estimated 9 in 10 rape victims from reporting an attack.

"Today, on the first annual Denim Day in NJ, I commend the ongoing efforts of the YWCA of Bergen County Rape Crisis Center to accomplish these goals. I stand united with the YWCA, survivors of sexual assault, and their loved ones in observing this important day."

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Learn More

More information about the YWCA of Bergen County Rape Crisis Center is available online at:  
<http://www.ywcabergencounty.org/programs/RCC/RCC.html> . Information about Denim Day NJ is available here.