

**State of Vermont  
Executive Department  
A Proclamation**

**WHEREAS,** Vermont shares a critical concern for victims of sexual violence and a desire to support their needs for justice and healing; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2021, member organizations of the Vermont Network supported 7,430 people, answered 21,477 hotline calls (a 25% increase from the previous year), and provided 408 forensic exams (117 pediatric and 291 adult cases); 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.

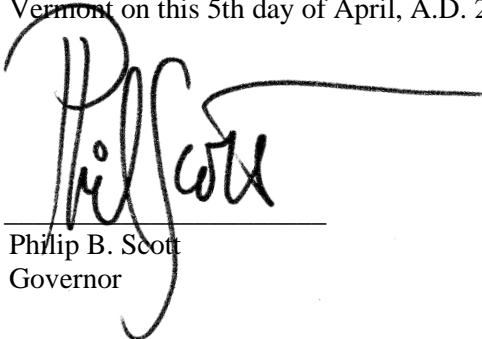
**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim April 6, 2022 as


**START BY BELIEVING DAY**

in Vermont.



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 5th day of April, A.D. 2022.

  
Philip B. Scott  
Governor

  
Brittney L. Wilson  
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs