



**Ending Sexual Assault in Missoula
Statement of Mayor John Engen
February 29, 2012**

The safety of the students of The University of Montana, all 15,000 of them who live, work, study and play in the City of Missoula, is paramount to the community.

The University of Montana can't go it alone in working diligently every day to protect its students.

Sexual assault, wherever it occurs in Missoula, is a community problem and it deserves our best community response, which is why we're standing together today -- the city, the university, students, law enforcement officers, advocates -- to meet the challenge of ending sexual assault in our community.

Beginning today, we're cooperating on a relentless campaign to end sexual assault. We're creating an environment where reporting the crime of sexual assault is always the correct, safe choice. We're creating an environment where everyone knows that without a report, we don't have a chance to bring offenders to justice and to spare another victim the horror of sexual assault. We're creating an environment where offenders know that there are clear, swift and immediate consequences to sexual assault.

Today, we're asking you to call 911 if you've been sexually assaulted, think you've been sexually assaulted, know someone who's been sexually assaulted or fear for someone who may be sexually assaulted. We're asking you to report so that we can begin to help. We're asking you to report to end sexual assault in our community.

Next week, we're rolling out a public education program, largely focused on the student community, driving home the importance of reporting sexual assault. We'll be speaking with students using their tools, Facebook, Twitter, texts. We're going to make sure that the folks we share a responsibility for protecting know what to do to help us and to help themselves end sexual violence in our community.

In addition, we should have in place new, practical, reliable protocols for the university and the city to communicate critical information in a timely manner. We've spent hours over the last week breaking down barriers to communication and sharing appropriate information while protecting privacy. We know we can do better and we will.

We're here today, together, to not only own the problem, but own the solution. We're here today, together, to say, with a unified voice, that sexual assault will end in Missoula, the home of The University of Montana, a great place to work, study and play, safely and securely.

John Engen
Mayor