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**Texas First Lady Anita Perry Launches
Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week in Texas**

AUSTIN – Texas First Lady Anita Perry today launched Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week. The week highlights prevention efforts and raises awareness on the critical issue of teen dating violence, a subject that many teenage children face daily and one that affects Texans statewide.

“This week is the chance for a fresh start for many Texas children,” Perry said. “With continued awareness and prevention efforts, we can ensure that no young Texan has to know the heartache of abuse from a dating partner.”

Research shows that one in three teenagers know someone who has been physically hurt by a partner. These violent behaviors and patterns, which can cause serious ramifications for victims, often carry through into their adult relationships.

To help educate Texans on the issues of teen dating violence, Gov. Rick Perry has proclaimed Feb.6 through Feb. 10 as Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week. Many schools and organizations across the state are sponsoring awareness events to educate children and parents.

“I am encouraged by the support from local community leaders and organizations as well as advocates across the state that are helping to facilitate this initiative and combat teen dating violence,” Perry said.

Participating in the event was the Governor’s Commission for Women, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, SafePlace, the Women’s Advocacy Project, the Texas Council on Family Violence, representatives from the American Bar Association and current high school students who are involved in local efforts to confront teen dating violence.

Texas students are also receiving information through the use of teen dating violence awareness and prevention toolkits, developed by the American Bar Association in association with teen advocates.

The first lady noted that with help from an additional grant from the Office of the Governor, 42 toolkits were purchased for schools’ use. The toolkits include handouts, materials for parents and teachers, prevention information and awareness resources.

As a former nurse with 17 years in the health care profession, Perry has focused much of her work as first lady on the health of children in Texas and domestic violence awareness and prevention efforts.

“In the weeks to come, I want all Texans to become informed about the dangers and long term ramifications of teen dating violence,” Perry said. “Together we can promote healthy relationships and prevent dating abuse, helping Texas children grow into healthy adults.

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