

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 17, 2016

RESOLUTION DECLARING FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A HUMAN RIGHT

WHEREAS, Twenty-four people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Almost half of teenagers throughout the United States, aged 13-18, reported having a controlling partner, while 80% reported knowing someone who has been controlled by a partner; and

WHEREAS, As of 2008 statistics, eleven percent of high school students and six percent of middle school students in Massachusetts reported being physically abused by a date sometime in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 12,550 calls came into Massachusetts Rape Crisis Centers annually between Fiscal Year 2002 and Fiscal Year 2007; and

WHEREAS, One in two women in Massachusetts have experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape; and

WHEREAS, As of 2010, approximately 52% of the New Bedford population consisted of women; and

WHEREAS, Between 2005-2007, there was an increase in the number of murder and domestic violence related suicides in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, Between 2003-2013, there were 277 domestic violence-related homicides in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with 60% of the victims being women or girls; and

WHEREAS, As of March 2016, the Bristol County District Attorney's Office has statistics that state that they monitor 156 men who are identified as high-risk offenders who have had a collective total of 869 protective orders taken out against them and have also been criminally charged 8,414 times; and

WHEREAS, Public safety officials, including members of the Police Department, along with City and local agencies, courts and other local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence for many individuals; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (ICHR) required the United States to fulfill its duty to prevent violence against women, as was the case of Jessica Lenahan (González) v. the United States, through enacting legislative and policy reforms without discrimination and to provide equal protection under the law for survivors of domestic violence and their children, under Article II of the American Declaration on Human Rights; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence encompasses various forms of abuse not always recognizable to members of the community, nor do victims or perpetrators of domestic violence fit a particular stereotype associated with the issue:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the New Bedford City Council hereby acknowledges that domestic violence is an issue that affects every person in society, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or income and recognizes that **FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A HUMAN RIGHT** that no person shall infringe upon and acknowledges that legislation and local government are the first steps in achieving that goal.