

**MEETING OF THE ITHACA TOWN BOARD
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2014**

TB RESOLUTION NO. 2014 - 197 : DECLARING FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A HUMAN RIGHT

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Ithaca seeks to enhance the public welfare by declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse, intimidation, isolation, and coercive control by intimate partners or family members; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a human rights concern that affects individuals of every gender, sexual orientation, race, age, nationality, religion, and economic status; and

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence must deal with the effects of physical injuries, long-term psychological damage, financial and career instability, and trouble finding safe housing; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence has a deeply negative impact on children who are exposed to it; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County answered 2,055 calls on its domestic violence and sexual assault hotline and served 212 new adult domestic violence clients, including providing shelter for 37 adults and their 25 children and helping 72 individuals obtain final orders of protection from the courts; and

WHEREAS, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, with the Cornell Law School Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and the Global Gender Justice Clinic, released a report in October 2014, "Recognizing Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Fundamental Human Right," which compiled international, national, and local statistics supporting the need for greater government involvement to address domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the report cites 2008 United Nations data that the cost of intimate partner violence in the United States exceeds \$5.8 billion per year, including medical care services and productivity losses; and

WHEREAS, according to the report, 87 women and men in New York State died as a result of intimate partner homicide in 2013; and

WHEREAS, according to the report, in 2013, law enforcement agencies in New York State outside of New York City responded to 189,152 domestic violence incidents and reported 31,106 assaults committed by intimate partners, 80% of which were committed against women; and

WHEREAS, the report notes that New York State courts issued 300,236 orders of protection in 2013, nearly 210,000 of which were required to be recorded in the Unified Court System's Domestic Violence Registry; and

WHEREAS, the report further notes that in Tompkins County, law enforcement agencies reported an average of 147 victims of domestic violence offenses per year between 2010 and 2013; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations and other international organizations have recognized that freedom from domestic violence is a human right and that governments have a responsibility to prevent and respond to such violence; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement, courts, cities, counties, towns, villages, social service agencies, and other local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, over the past 25 years, Tompkins County has been a leader in domestic violence response by introducing a number of initiatives, including the establishment of an Integrated Domestic Violence Court; and

WHEREAS, by recognizing that freedom from domestic violence is a human right, the Town of Ithaca seeks to raise awareness and enhance domestic violence response and education in communities, the public and private sectors, and within government agencies;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Board of the Town of Ithaca recognizes domestic violence as a human rights concern and declares that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right;
2. That state and local governments should continue to secure this human right on behalf of their citizens;
3. That the Town of Ithaca will ensure that its personnel policies and practices are informed by awareness of domestic violence survivors' needs;

4. That the Town of Ithaca will support the county's and human service agencies' efforts to prevent domestic violence, strengthen the response to domestic violence, and improve the provision of services to survivors; and
5. That a copy of this resolution shall be sent to the City and Village Mayors and Town Supervisors in Tompkins County, the Tompkins County Council of Governments, the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, the Tompkins County Sheriff, the Police Chiefs for the City of Ithaca and Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Groton, and Trumansburg, the Cornell University Police Chief, the Ithaca College Public Safety Director, the Tompkins Cortland Community College Campus Safety Director, the New York State Police Troop C Station Commander, the Tompkins County District Attorney, the judges in Tompkins County, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly member Barbara Lifton, Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Dean Skelos and Jeff Klein, Senator Thomas O'Mara, and the media.

Moved: Pat Leary

Seconded: Tee Ann Hunter

Vote: Ayes – Leary, Hunter, Engman, Howe, DePaolo and Goodman