

RESOLUTION 14-158

RESOLUTION DECLARING FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A HUMAN RIGHT

The following Resolution was duly presented for consideration by the Town Board:

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Lansing 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 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, upon due deliberation thereupon, the Town Board of the Town of Lansing has hereby

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Board of the Town of Lansing recognizes domestic violence as a human rights concern and declares that the 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 Lansing will ensure that its personnel policies and practices are informed by awareness of domestic violence survivors' needs;
4. That the Town of Lansing will support the counties and human services agencies' efforts to prevent domestic violence, strengthen the response to domestic violence, and improve the provision of services to survivors.

The question of the adoption of such proposed Resolution was duly motioned by Councilperson Ruth Hopkins and seconded by Supervisor Kathy Miller, and put to a roll call vote with the following results:

Councilperson Doug Dake - Aye
Councilperson Edward LaVigne - Aye

Councilperson Ruth Hopkins - Aye
Supervisor Kathy Miller - Aye

Accordingly, the foregoing Resolution was approved, carried, and duly adopted on December 17, 2014.