

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION

DECLARING that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right and further **DECLARING** that state and local governments have a responsibility to respect and ensure this right on behalf of their citizens.

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

WHEREAS, while domestic violence is often marginalized as a private concern, its impact is felt across the entire community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, more than one in three women and more than one in four men in the United States will experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lives; and this problem disproportionately impacts women of color, women with disabilities, women with low income, and immigrant women, as well as their children; and

WHEREAS, according to the Rainbow Response Coalition, in 2012, approximately one in three residents of the District of Columbia who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT) have been in an abusive relationship; and

WHEREAS, thirteen individuals died as a result of domestic violence in the District of Columbia in 2011, according to the Metropolitan Police Department; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Office of Attorney General reports that in 2012, a total of 5,478 individuals received assistance at the District's two Domestic Violence Intake Centers, an average of 22 individuals per day; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Police Department reports that in 2012 the Department received 31,815 domestic-related crime calls—approximately 87 calls each day; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that in 2011, there was a 15% increase in foreign-born individuals and a 26% increase in the number of individuals between the ages of 13 – 17 who received assistance at the District's two Domestic Violence Intake Centers; and

WHEREAS, local entities such as police departments, providers of medical services, courts, cities, and social service agencies constitute a crucial line of defense against domestic violence and incur significant monetary costs due to domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, world leaders and leaders within the United States recognize that domestic violence is a human rights concern; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against

Women recognizes the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity, and dignity of all human beings that are enshrined in international human rights treaties, and urges States to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women; and

WHEREAS, in view of the alarming growth in the number of cases of violence against women throughout the world, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1994/45 on March, 4, 1994, appointing a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and consequences; and

WHEREAS, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women has urged the United States government to reassess its response to domestic violence, stating that “violence against women is the most pervasive human rights violation which continues to challenge every country in the world, and the U.S. is no exception”; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found in *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States* that the United States’ failure to protect women from gender-based violence constitutes discrimination and a human rights violation, and urged the United States to enact law and policy reforms to protect victims of domestic violence and their children; and

WHEREAS, by recognizing that domestic violence is a human rights issue, the District of Columbia will raise awareness and enhance domestic violence education in communities, the public and private sectors, and within government agencies; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the District of Columbia:

Section 1. That the District of Columbia joins other cities in the United States and governments around the world by declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right.

Section 2. That the District of Columbia declares that state and local governments bear a responsibility to respect and ensure this human right on behalf of their citizens.

Section 3. That local agencies in the District of Columbia shall incorporate the principles embodied in this resolution into their policies and practices.

Section 4. That a copy of this resolution shall be delivered to the Office of the Mayor, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Office of the Attorney General, the District of Columbia Superior Court, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the Office of Victims Services, Department of Human Services, Office of Human Rights, and all other relevant departments.