

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**IOWA CITY RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE FREEDOM FROM DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT**

**WHO/HOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS**

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

WHEREAS, domestic violence includes various forms of abuse not always apparent to members of the community, nor do victims or perpetrators of domestic violence fit into any particular category or stereotype associated with the issue; 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, 30% to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household; and

WHEREAS, traumatized children are often the silent victims in homes where domestic violence occurs; this trauma has detrimental effects upon a child's cognitive, emotional, and psychological development, significantly increasing an exposed child's risk of developing behavioral problems during childhood as well as the potential for becoming an abuser or engaging in criminal violence as an adult; and

WHEREAS, children are always negatively impacted by violence in the home, whether they are physically or verbally abused themselves or witness the violence; and

**STATISTICS**

WHEREAS, relationship violence is chronically underreported, and statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence show that only 1 out of 3 cases is ever reported; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Iowa City Police Department (ICPD) responded to 602 calls for service related to domestic assault, stalking, protection order violations and relationship-oriented harassment; this figure represents an increase from 579 calls in 2014; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, ICPD reported 288 arrests related to domestic violence; this figure represents an increase from 265 arrests in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the ICPD responded to 2,435 domestic violence related incidents between 2011 and 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) helped 765 adult victims of domestic violence in 2014; DVIP helped 363 children in 2014; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence victims made 12,595 calls for assistance to the DVIP crisis hotline or other resources in 2014; and

WHEREAS, 301 victims of domestic violence needed overnight protection at the DVIP battered women's shelter in 2014. The average length of stay was 29 nights, totaling 8,729 nights of shelter provided in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Department of Justice reports that domestic abuse has led to murder by methods that include stabbing, strangling, shooting, beating, drug overdosing, deliberate car crashes, and burning to death in the home; and

WHEREAS, 208 women and men in the state of Iowa died as a result of intimate partner homicide between 1995 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Department of Justice reported that, of the 174 women killed between 1995 and 2014 in domestic abuse murder, 67 women were known to have left or been leaving their partners at the time of their death; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Department of Justice reported that 282 daughters and sons survived these murdered women. 167 of the surviving children were minors at the time of their mothers' deaths and 62 of the surviving children witnessed the domestic abuse murders; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Crime Victim Assistance Division reported that 622 people filed for Protective Orders for Domestic Abuse in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Crime Victim Assistance Division reported that domestic abuse programs across the state served 23,301 domestic violence victims in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Crime Victim Assistance Division reported that \$555,923 of compensation payments were made due to domestic abuse in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Iowa domestic abuse programs statewide offered 2,729 people 74,242 nights of shelter in 2014; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Network Against Domestic Violence, there are more than 20,000 phone calls per day placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 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 intimate partners during their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, as reported by the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) conducted by National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as reported by NISVS, every 9 to 15 seconds a woman is battered in the United States, and every 2.5 minutes someone is sexually assaulted in the United States; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence problems disproportionately impact women and children of color, women and children with disabilities, women and children with low incomes, and immigrant women and children as these groups are less likely to be aware of or have access to domestic violence resources; and

WHEREAS, 44% of African American women, 37% of Hispanic women, and 35% of white women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner; and 39% of African American men, 27% of Hispanic men, and 28% of white men have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, according to the Centers for Disease Control; and

WHEREAS, according to a study conducted by Liz Claiborne Inc. and the Family Violence Prevention Fund, almost half of the teenagers in the United States report having a controlling partner and 80% report knowing someone who has been controlled by a partner; and

## **SURVIVORS**

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence have the fundamental right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment; and

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence face many challenges, some of which directly or indirectly relate to the fact that many survivors are unaware of or have trouble accessing the domestic violence services provided by the City of Iowa City and other public and private agencies; and

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence endure physical injuries, long-term psychological and emotional damage, financial and career instability, insecure or inadequate safe housing, and social stigma; and

## **FINANCIAL**

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control estimate that the cost of intimate partner violence in the United States exceeds \$10 billion per year, including medical care services and productivity losses; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement agencies, courts, cities, social service agencies, and other local government entities incur significant monetary costs due to domestic violence; and

## **LOCAL**

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

WHEREAS, promoting the recognition of domestic violence as an issue of human rights will raise public awareness, encourage family-violence education in communities, and enhance public welfare; and

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

WHEREAS, there is one domestic violence shelter in Iowa City, 30 local domestic violence crisis hotlines throughout Iowa, and one statewide domestic violence hotline; and

## **UNITED STATES**

WHEREAS, millions of domestic violence incidents occur in the United States every year; and

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

WHEREAS, in 1988 the federal Office of Victims of Crime was established, and in 1995 the federal Office of Violence Against Women was established, and these federal initiatives led to state initiatives that govern the local protocols in place today; and

WHEREAS, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and its amendments applies to all victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their gender; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 President Barack Obama reauthorized and extended the Violence Against Women Act to advance the cause of security, justice, and dignity for all domestic violence victims in the United States; and

## **INTERNATIONAL**

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a global problem and 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, domestic violence is a violation of the human rights guaranteed by international law, including: the (1) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and (2) the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which the

United States has ratified through coordination and consent between the Executive Branch and the Senate; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has stated that “violence against women is the most pervasive human rights violation” and that responses to violence should recognize human rights as a premise; and

WHEREAS, the 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; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has stated that the United States’ “lack of substantive protective legislation at federal and state levels, and the inadequate implementation of some laws, policies and programs has resulted in the continued prevalence of violence against women and the discriminatory treatment of victims, with a particularly detrimental impact on poor, minority and immigrant women;” and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women identified several deficiencies in the regulation of domestic violence in the United States, including the need to explore more uniform remedies for victims of domestic violence; the need to re-evaluate existing mechanisms for protecting victims and punishing offenders at federal, state, and local levels, given that calls for help often do not result in either arrests or successful prosecutions; and the need for additional public education campaigns that condemn all forms of violence; and

WHEREAS, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found in *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzalez) 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 at all levels to protect survivors of domestic violence and their children; and

## **IOWA SUPREME COURT AND IOWA LEGISLATURE**

WHEREAS, the Iowa Supreme Court has acknowledged that domestic violence rarely involves a single isolated incident. Rather, domestic violence is a pattern of behavior, with each episode connected to the others; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Supreme Court has recognized a strong interest in preventing domestic violence and responding to the psychological and emotional needs of victims; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Legislature has acknowledged a compelling interest in preventing domestic violence by enacting and amending Iowa Civil Code 236 and Iowa Criminal Codes 708.2A and 664A.

**FINAL RESOLUTION**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF IOWA CITY, this Council joins world leaders and leaders in the United States in recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a fundamental human right; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council recognizes that Iowa City departments and agencies already have protocols in place that acknowledge and address multiple problems that arise from domestic violence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council strongly supports the continuation and expansion of City staff's efforts to eradicate domestic violence in our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall serve to assure the residents of Iowa City that all government bodies bear a moral responsibility to secure this human right on behalf of their residents; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall serve as a charge to all City staff to ensure that City policies and practices are informed by the principles contained in this resolution and by domestic violence survivors' voices and needs.

Passed and approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

Approved by

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney's Office