

Upon the recommendation of Councilors Alisa F. Klein and Gina-Louise Sciarra

Resolution on Domestic Violence

**WHEREAS**, the United Nations, world leaders, and leaders within the United States have all recognized domestic violence as a human rights issue; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton seeks to enhance the public welfare of its residents by declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right; and

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that each year up to 9 million individuals in the United States are victims of intimate partner violence, that is: according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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

**WHEREAS**, domestic violence affects adults and children of all backgrounds and ages, but women experience more domestic violence than men and are significantly more likely than men to be injured during an assault by an intimate partner;

**WHEREAS**, only approximately one-quarter of all physical assaults, one-fifth of all rapes, and one-half of all stalking incidents perpetrated against women by intimate partners are reported to the police; and

**WHEREAS**, 15.5 million children in the United States live in families in which domestic violence was perpetrated at least once in the past year, and are adversely affected by violence in the home, whether they are physically or verbally abused themselves or are exposed to the violence as witnesses; and

**WHEREAS**, victims and survivors of domestic and family violence experience physical injuries, long-term psychological damage, financial instability, difficulty finding safe housing and other challenges, some of which directly or indirectly relate to services provided by the City; and

**WHEREAS**, domestic violence is cited as a significant factor in homelessness among families; and

**WHEREAS**, the economic burden of domestic violence in the United States is over \$8 billion per year in direct medical costs and loss of productivity; and

**WHEREAS**, Safe Passage (formerly called Necessities/Necessidades) in Northampton has worked to prevent, respond to, and end domestic violence, and served survivors of domestic violence and their children, friends, and families in Hampshire County since 1977, and in 2014 alone, served over 1,400 individuals from Hampshire County; and

**WHEREAS**, Safe Passage operates a crisis hotline serving victims and survivors of domestic violence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to offer crisis intervention, support, information, and referrals, as well as provides ongoing trauma-informed counseling and advocacy and a safe residence for survivors of domestic violence and their families; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northampton Police Department, Hampshire Sheriff's Office, Northwest District

Attorney's Office, Northampton Health Department and other City government offices, as well as social service agencies and non-profit groups have worked with Safe Passage to implement a coordinated system for the prevention of and response to acts of domestic and family violence in the City; and

**WHEREAS**, these aforementioned entities and other local government entities incur significant monetary costs due to domestic and family violence; and

**WHEREAS**, Safe Passage estimates that more than 15,000 women in Hampshire County have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime; and

**WHEREAS**, community members who are informed and skilled in recognizing domestic violence and supporting survivors, along with local medical personnel, the police and sheriff's departments, courts, social services agencies, and other government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2012, the Northampton Police Department responded to 509 domestic violence calls; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northampton City Council wishes to raise awareness and educate the residents of Northampton about the grave implications and consequences of domestic violence on individuals and families because public awareness has the potential to increase the identification and reporting of abuse by the public, professionals, and victims themselves, and can act as a catalyst for prevention;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of Northampton, Massachusetts

1. Joins the United Nations and leaders throughout the world and within the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a human rights concern and declares that the freedom from domestic and family violence is a fundamental human right; and
2. Commits to raising awareness of domestic violence and its devastating effects on survivors, families, and communities, and cooperating with all City departments, non-governmental organizations, and local businesses to promote programs that prevent and respond to domestic violence; and
3. Pledges its continued support for Safe Passage and all other entities designed to prevent and respond to domestic violence including assisting victims and survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and bringing an end to domestic violence; and
4. Declares that the City is committed to responding diligently to acts of domestic and family violence, that all of the City's departments shall incorporate the principles embodied in this resolution into their policies and practices, and encourages all local organizations and agencies to do so as well; and
5. Will send a copy of this resolution to the Northwest District Attorney's Office, the Northampton Health Department, the Hampshire Sheriff's Office, the Northampton Police Department, and other City departments and local agencies.

In City Council, December 3, 2015  
Passed First Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No  
Attest: *Paul Porez*, Clerk of Council

In City Council, December 17, 2015  
Passed Second Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No  
Attest: *Paul Porez*, Clerk of Council

Approved: David J. Narkewicz, Mayor

Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled

I hereby certify that the above Resolution passed the Northampton City Council on December 17, 2015  
David J. Narkewicz, Mayor approved the Resolution on December 18, 2015

Attest: *Paul Porez*, Clerk of Council