

Legislation Text

File #: 21-07, **Version:** 1

Clerk 10/14/2021

A RESOLUTION recognizing October 2021 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, supporting funding for survivor-led services, and committing to model nonviolent norms, support survivors and continue shared work on addressing racism and gender-based violence as public health issues.

WHEREAS, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month was established in October 1987 to create a community dialogue about violence, to advocate for legislation to protect victims, and to encourage public awareness and action to prevent abuse, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a pattern of violent, intimidating, and coercive behaviors that a person uses to gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner, and

WHEREAS, before the COVID-19 pandemic, one in four women and nearly one in ten men in the United States reported having experienced intimate partner violence during their lifetimes, and more than half of respondents to the 2015 National Center for Transgender Equality Transgender Survey reported some form of intimate partner violence, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence has a severe impact on its victims, including adverse physical and mental health outcomes and a high risk of homicide, and

WHEREAS, one in six homicides is perpetrated by an intimate partner, and

WHEREAS, one in three teens has experienced some form of abuse in a dating relationship, and nearly half of dating college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating relationships, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families, and

WHEREAS, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit people ("LGBTQ2S+") experience disproportionate rates of domestic and sexual violence and face unique barriers to accessing support, especially for transgender, genderqueer and non-binary survivors. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence

Survey 40 percent of lesbian women, 61 percent of bisexual women, 26 percent of gay men and 37 percent of bisexual men experience one or more of rape, physical violence and stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetimes, and

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2020, the King County Board of Health declared Racism a Public Health Crisis, and

WHEREAS, individual and community impacts of intimate partner violence are compounded by racial, gender, sexual orientation and other forms of oppression and Black, Indigenous and other people of color, people living in poverty, LGBTQ2S+ people; elders, people with disabilities and other people targeted by oppression are affected by intimate partner violence in significant and complex ways, including reduced access to appropriate supports, and

WHEREAS, pandemic and disaster response literature suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased risk, particularly for individuals who have already experienced domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Indian Health Board's research division, Urban Indian Health Institute, conducted a study of sexual violence resources for urban American Indian and Alaska Native survivors, and found that 17 percent of survivors surveyed need resources for their physical safety because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the top needs of survivors are direct services, including mental health care and basic necessities like utilities, food access and housing, and

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2021, the King County Board of Health heard directly from community partners including leaders from Urban Indian Health Institute, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center and the Coalition Ending Gender-based Violence, on the impacts of COVID-19 on gender-based violence, and

WHEREAS, King County is home to an array of innovative, effective programs serving the diverse needs of survivors, including BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+-led and serving organizations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

A. The board recognizes October 2021 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and joins advocates and communities throughout King County in taking action to prevent domestic violence by standing with survivors committing to build a safer future for all children, young people, adults and families in our community.

B. The board supports increased, stable, private and public funding for programs providing survivor-advocacy services throughout King County and urge significant resources for direct services be allocated for BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

C. The board commits to educate themselves on gender-based violence, to model nonviolent norms based in respect, consent, and equity and to support survivors in both their personal and professional roles.

D. The board commits to continue shared work on addressing racism and gender-based violence as public health issues.