

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 12-0034R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Curran, Henry, Stokes, Kraft, Branch, Middleton, Holton, Cole,
Mosby, Scott, Clarke, Reisinger, President Young, Councilmember Welch
Introduced and adopted: March 19, 2012

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

The Freedom from Domestic Violence is a Fundamental Human Right

FOR the purpose of joining world leaders and leaders within the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a human rights concern and declaring that the freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right.

Recitals

WHEREAS, more than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 4 men in the United States will experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lives, according to the Centers for Disease Control; and

WHEREAS, 44% percent 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, 43 Marylanders died as a result of domestic violence between July 2010 and June 2011 according to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence; and

WHEREAS, the Women’s Law Center of Maryland provided services to over 800 people who experienced domestic violence in 2010, including: Protection Order advocacy for 769 clients, immigration representation and services for 62 clients, and information and referrals on hundreds of Family Law Hotline calls related to domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the House of Ruth of Maryland provided services to more than 600 women and children at 13 Baltimore locations in 2010, including: shelter to 114 families and 193 additional women, psychotherapy to over 400 women and children through its Domestic Violence Support Center, and childcare at its Kidspace developmental daycare center; and

WHEREAS, 4,265 Protective Order petitions were filed for protection from domestic violence in Baltimore City between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010, with a total of 25,091 such petitions in Maryland District Courts during that year, according to the Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts; and

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 **WHEREAS**, the petitioner requesting protection from abuse was represented by an attorney in
2 only 23 of 369 proceedings observed at the Baltimore City Eastside District Court by University
3 of Baltimore Family Law Clinic Court Watch Project between September 19, 2011 and October
4 14, 2011; and

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

7 **WHEREAS**, police and sheriff’s departments, courts, cities, social services agencies, and other
8 local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence; and

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

11 **WHEREAS**, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women,
12 adopted in 1993, recognizes the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights
13 and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity, and dignity of all human beings;
14 and

15 **WHEREAS**, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has urged
16 the United States government to reassess existing mechanisms for protecting domestic violence
17 survivors and for punishing abusers, stating that “violence against women is the most pervasive
18 human rights violation which continues to challenge every country in the world, and the U.S. is
19 not exception”; and

20 **WHEREAS**, on August 17, 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found the
21 United States in violation of Articles I, II, VII, and XVII of the American Declaration for
22 breaching its duty to protect Jessica Lenahan and her children from domestic violence, also
23 determining that the U.S.’s failure to protect women from gender-based violence constitutes
24 discrimination and denies women their right to equality.

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, this Body
26 joins world leaders and leaders within the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a
27 human rights concern and declares that the freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental
28 human right.

29 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state and local governments should continue to secure
30 this human right on behalf of their citizens.

31 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
32 Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the
33 Maryland General Assembly, the Police Commissioner, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of
34 Criminal Justice, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.