

Resolution - International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and 16 Days of Activism

WHEREAS November 25th is recognized as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and has launched '16 Days of Activism' to urge action on the disproportionate and devastating social and economic impacts of gender-based violence on women and girls.

WHEREAS the City of St. John's recognizes that violence against women and girls is rooted in unequal gender power relations, structural inequality and discrimination.

WHEREAS a recent report released by the St. John's Status of Women's Council showed startling statistics that indicated the province's rate of domestic violence is higher than the national average.

WHEREAS protecting women's rights is critical to ensuring a safe, resilient and sustainable future.

WHEREAS violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and is everyone's business.

WHEREAS survivors of sexual assault deserve to be listened to, believed and supported.

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to employ a critical lens to the work being done around legal and professional reform for participants in the criminal justice system to address the justice gap.

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF ST. JOHN'S:

1. Support the Province in the formation of an all-party, interdepartmental task force by writing all three-party leaders to work collaboratively to address judicial and educational reform regarding gender-based violence.
2. Support mandatory training for judges, lawyers and police on the law of sexual assault and the psychological and neurobiological impacts of trauma. A recently passed federal bill requires training for new Supreme Court of NL judges, however, this training is not mandatory for judges who are provincially appointed.
3. Support the formation of a law which sets out acceptable behaviour on how lawyers can interact with witnesses to prevent further trauma.
4. Support the expansion of the Domestic Violence Court to include all forms of gender-based violence. Currently, an intimate relationship must exist before the parties can access the court. This means that all date rape or stranger assault situations are not eligible. Child sexual assault, by someone known to the child, is not eligible.
5. Support the work and expansion of the 'Journey Project', a partnership between Public Legal Information Association of NL (PLIAN) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre (NLSACPC). This project offers legal support and navigation to individuals who have experienced sexual violence.
6. Support updating the curriculum in schools to include feminism and consent. Survivors are everywhere and if we teach children to respect each other's bodily autonomy and consent, we start them on a path of respect.

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