

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 421

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness
Month.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 18, 2021

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic
Violence Awareness Month.

Whereas, according to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey—

- (1) up to 12,000,000 individuals in the United States report experiencing intimate partner violence annually, including physical violence, rape, or stalking; and
- (2) approximately 1 in 5 women in the United States and up to 1 in 7 men in the United States have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetimes;

Whereas, on average, 3 women in the United States are killed each day by a current or former intimate partner, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics;

Whereas domestic violence can affect anyone, but women who are 18 to 34 years of age typically experience the highest rates of domestic violence;

Whereas survivors of domestic violence are strong, courageous, and resilient;

Whereas most female victims of intimate partner violence have been victimized by the same offender previously;

Whereas domestic violence is cited as a significant factor in homelessness among families;

Whereas millions of children are exposed to domestic violence each year;

Whereas research shows that boys who are exposed to domestic violence in their households are more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence;

Whereas victims of domestic violence experience immediate and long-term negative outcomes, including detrimental effects on mental and physical health;

Whereas research consistently shows that being abused by an intimate partner increases an individual's likelihood of substance use as well as associated harmful consequences;

Whereas victims of domestic violence may lose several days of paid work each year and may lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from domestic violence;

Whereas crisis hotlines serving domestic violence victims operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, and offer important crisis intervention services, support services, information, and referrals for victims;

Whereas staff and volunteers of domestic violence shelters and programs in the United States, in cooperation with

56 State and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, provide essential services to—

- (1) thousands of adults and children each day; and
- (2) 1,000,000 adults and children each year;

Whereas more than 160 States, counties, and cities have experienced an increase in reports of domestic violence during the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas domestic violence programs and hotlines have seen a substantial increase in contacts since the beginning of the COVID–19 pandemic and continue to experience a surge in requests for services;

Whereas local YWCAs shared that between March 31, 2020, and late summer 2020, as a result of the impact from the COVID–19 pandemic—

- (1) 69 percent of respondent YWCAs that operate domestic violence hotlines reported an increase in demand for services; and
- (2) 64 percent of nearly 100 local YWCAs who provide domestic violence services (either emergency shelter or transitional housing) reported an increase in demand for domestic violence shelter;

Whereas while violence as a lived experience of American Indian and Alaska Native women exists in less pressing times, the COVID–19 pandemic has increased the challenges and barriers to accessing safety by exacerbating already existing issues including—

- (1) lack of safe housing for victims;
- (2) lack of space in shelters for victims to maintain safe social distancing;
- (3) lack of personal protective equipment for staff of tribal shelters and victim services programs;
- (4) limited transportation for victims; and

(5) lack of access to adequate health care;

Whereas respondents to a survey of domestic violence programs reported that survivors of domestic violence are facing financial challenges related to COVID–19 and $\frac{3}{4}$ of those respondents reported that survivors are having trouble accessing food, and more than half of those respondents have reported that survivors cannot pay their bills;

Whereas medical professionals have reported that survivors of domestic violence are presenting with more severe injuries during the pandemic;

Whereas domestic violence programs are having to change the way they provide services in response to the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas advocates for survivors of domestic violence and survivors face the same challenges with child care and facilitating online learning that others do;

Whereas, according to a 2020 survey conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 76,525 domestic violence victims were served by domestic violence shelters and programs around the United States in a single day;

Whereas some victims of domestic violence face additional challenges in accessing law enforcement and services due to conditions specific to the communities in which they live;

Whereas law enforcement officers in the United States put their lives at risk each day by responding to incidents of domestic violence, which can be among the most volatile and deadly calls;

Whereas Congress first demonstrated a significant commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence with the enactment of the landmark Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.);

Whereas Congress has remained committed to protecting survivors of all forms of domestic violence and sexual abuse by making Federal funding available to support the activities that are authorized under—

(1) the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.);

(2) the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291 et seq.); and

(3) the VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–27; 135 Stat. 301);

Whereas there is a need to continue to support programs and activities aimed at domestic violence intervention and domestic violence prevention in the United States;

Whereas domestic violence programs provide trauma-informed services to protect the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of survivors of domestic violence; and

Whereas individuals and organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending domestic violence should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the Senate—

3 (A) supports the goals and ideals of “National Domestic Violence Awareness Month”;

4 (B) commends domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders

1 serving victims of domestic violence, for their
2 compassionate support of survivors of domestic
3 violence; and

4 (C) recognizes the strength and courage of
5 survivors of domestic violence; and

6 (2) it is the sense of the Senate that Congress
7 should—

8 (A) continue to raise awareness of—

9 (i) domestic violence in the United
10 States; and

11 (ii) the corresponding devastating ef-
12 fects of domestic violence on survivors,
13 families, and communities; and

14 (B) pledge continued support for programs
15 designed to—

16 (i) assist survivors of domestic vio-
17 lence;

18 (ii) hold perpetrators of domestic vio-
19 lence accountable; and

20 (iii) bring an end to domestic violence.

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