



ADOPTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 002-2015
(ID # 5348)**

**Resolution of the Tompkins County Council of Governments
Declaring Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Human Right**

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Kate Supron, Member - Village of Cayuga Heights
SECONDER:	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
AYES:	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Supron, Rankin, Petrovic

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Council of Governments seeks to enhance the public welfare by declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse, intimidation, isolation, and coercive control by intimate partners or family members, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a human rights concern that affects individuals of every gender, sexual orientation, race, age, nationality, religion, and economic status, and

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence must deal with the effects of physical injuries, long-term psychological damage, financial and career instability, and trouble finding safe housing, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence has a deeply negative impact on children who are exposed to it, and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County answered 2,055 calls on its domestic violence and sexual assault hotline and served 212 new adult domestic violence clients, including providing shelter for 37 adults and their 25 children and helping 72 individuals obtain final orders of protection from the courts, and

WHEREAS, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, with Cornell Law School’s Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Global Gender Justice Clinic, released a report in October 2014, “Recognizing Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Fundamental Human Right,” which compiled international, national, state, and local statistics supporting the need for greater government involvement in preventing and responding to domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, the report cites Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics noting that 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 during their lifetimes, and

WHEREAS, according to the report, 87 women and men in New York State died as a result of intimate partner homicide in 2013, and

WHEREAS, according to the report, in 2013, law enforcement agencies in New York State outside of New York City responded to 189,152 domestic violence incidents and reported 31,106 assaults committed by intimate partners, 80% of which were committed against women, and

WHEREAS, the report notes that New York State courts issued 300,236 orders of protection in 2013, nearly 210,000 of which were required to be recorded in the Unified Court System's Domestic Violence Registry, and

WHEREAS, the report further notes that in Tompkins County, law enforcement agencies reported an average of 147 victims of domestic violence offences per year between 2010 and 2013, and

WHEREAS, social service agencies, law enforcement, courts, cities, towns, villages, and other local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has recognized that freedom from domestic violence is a human right affecting the realization of many other rights and freedoms and that governments have a responsibility to prevent and respond to such violence, and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found in *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States* that the United States' failure to protect women from gender-based violence constitutes discrimination and a human rights violation and urged the United States to enact law and policy reforms at all levels to protect survivors of domestic violence and their children, and

WHEREAS, over the past 25 years, Tompkins County has been a leader in domestic violence response by introducing a number of initiatives, including the establishment of an Integrated Domestic Violence Court, and

WHEREAS, by recognizing that freedom from domestic violence is a human right, the Tompkins County Council of Governments will raise awareness and enhance domestic violence response and education in communities, the public and private sectors, and within government departments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Tompkins County Council of Governments:

1. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments joins world leaders and leaders in the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a human rights concern and declares that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right;
2. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments believes that state and local governments should continue to secure this human right on behalf of their citizens;
3. That this resolution shall serve as a charge to all local governments in Tompkins County to ensure that their policies and practices are informed by the principles contained in this resolution and by domestic violence survivors' voices and needs;
4. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments will support the county's and human service agencies' efforts to prevent domestic violence, strengthen the response to domestic violence, and improve the provision of services to survivors;
5. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments shall consider undertaking, together with community partners, a study of the causes of local domestic violence incidents and of the gaps and barriers in local governments' service delivery to survivors of domestic violence, with the goals of preventing domestic violence, strengthening the county-wide response to domestic violence, and improving the provision of services to survivors; and
6. That a copy of this resolution shall be sent to the City and Village Mayors and Town Supervisors in Tompkins County, the Honorable Members of the Tompkins County Legislature, the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, the Tompkins County Sheriff, the Police Chiefs for the Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Groton, and Trumansburg, the Cornell University Police Chief, the Ithaca College Public Safety Director, the Tompkins Cortland Community College Campus Safety Director, the New York State Police Troop C Station Commander, the Tompkins County District Attorney, the judges in Tompkins County, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Dean Skelos and Jeff Klein, Senators James Seward, Thomas O'Mara, and Michael Nozzolio, and the media.