



The County of Brant

David Bailey
MAYOR

December 21, 2023

Re: County of Brant Resolution – Gender-based Violence and Intimate-partner Violence

I am writing on behalf of the County of Brant council to request that your municipality declare a gender-based violence and intimate partner violence epidemic across Canada, as seen in the attached County of Brant resolution which was passed at the County of Brant Council meeting of November 28, 2023.

Sincerely,

David Bailey
Mayor
County of Brant

Encl. County of Brant Resolution – Gender-based Violence and Intimate-partner Violence

November 28, 2023

Re: County of Brant Resolution – November 28, 2023

At the meeting of November 28, 2023, the Council of the County of Brant adopted the following:

WHEREAS more than 72 municipalities and regions including the Cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Burlington, Windsor, London, Woodstock and most recently, Brantford, along with Peel, Durham and Halton Regions, Norfolk County, Haldimand County, and, of course, Renfrew County, across Ontario have declared a gender-based violence and/or intimate partner violence epidemic; and

WHEREAS by declaring gender-based violence and intimate partner violence an epidemic, The County of Brant can join the growing number of municipalities and regions in Canada in demanding action from all levels of government to address this growing epidemic; and

WHEREAS the incidences of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence increased exponentially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and have not decreased, while funding to provide the growing demand of services and support for victims and survivors of intimate partner and gender-based violence has not kept pace; and

WHEREAS In 2022, the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (a division of Statistics Canada) issued a report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women that highlighted the rural rate of reported intimate partner violence against women to be 598 per 100,000 population in Ontario, which compares to 378 per 100,000 population in urban locations; and

WHEREAS those experiencing gender-based and intimate partner violence in rural and farming communities, like those in the County of Brant, face unique risk factors such as isolation, lack of and/or barriers to service and support, strong traditions and community values around firearms, and a sense of responsibility for livestock and pets, which prevent women from seeking support and increase the risk of domestic violence and domestic homicide; and

WHEREAS The Brant OPP reported that, as of September 2023, year-to-date domestic disturbance calls have increased by 4.3%; and

WHEREAS Nova Vita answered over 4,500 crisis and support calls in 2022, and in the same year, 648 women who were seeking safe shelter from family violence were turned away because the shelters were full and had no bed space to offer them. This number doesn't include their children; and

WHEREAS In Ontario last year, a woman was killed every week (52 femicides in 52 weeks) and, In Canada, a woman was killed every 2 days; and

WHEREAS 30% of women report having experienced a sexual assault since the age of 15, and 44% of women report having experienced some form of intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS Gender-Based Violence impacts individuals, families, and communities, and it also places a costly burden on the health, social, and justice systems. In 2009, it was estimated that IPV had an economic cost of \$7.4 billion annually and sexual violence a cost of \$4.8 billion annually; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario states that it will not declare gender-based and intimate partner violence an epidemic as the term epidemic refers to the spread of diseases; and

WHEREAS Merriam Webster defines disease as a condition of the living animal or of one of its parts that impairs normal functioning and is typically manifested by distinguishing signs and symptoms; and

WHEREAS the numerous physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms that are a consequence of gender-based and intimate partner violence reveal that it meets the definition of disease.

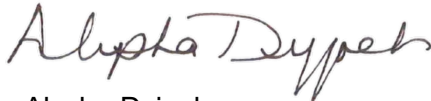
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT The County of Brant Council DECLARE Gender-based violence and Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic in the County of Brant; and*
- B. THAT The County of Brant Council RECOMMEND that gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence be declared an epidemic in the Province of Ontario; and*
- C. That The County of Brant Council REQUEST that Femicide be added as a term to the Criminal Code of Canada and state its position to the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney General Canada, and the Prime Minister of Canada; and*
- D. THAT The County of Brant Council REQUEST that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all municipalities and regions in Ontario declare a gender-based and intimate partner violence epidemic across the country; and*
- E. THAT The County of Brant REQUEST the provincial and federal governments rightfully declare intimate partner and gender-based violence an epidemic and enact the additional 95 recommendations from the inquest into the 2015 murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County, Ontario, which provide a roadmap to preventing intimate partner violence from escalating to femicide; and*
- F. THAT The County of Brant REQUEST that the provincial and federal governments provide the necessary support to municipalities, regions and their emergency and social*

services to meaningfully address the gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence epidemic; and

- G. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to assess what would be required to complete a Community IPV Action Plan that includes items such as resources to address the local IPV epidemic, an awareness campaign, funding a dedicated rural outreach worker through Nova Vita, approaches to engaging with at-risk youth, and other opportunities for County of Brant Council to support, and bring a report back to council before the end of the year for possible inclusions to be considered for the 2024 budget; and*
- H. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include within the plan the ways the County of Brant can ensure that all victims of intimate partner violence are included, regardless of gender, sex, identity, family status, social economic status, and other barriers to accessing traditional intimate partner violence support services.*
- I. THAT a copy of this resolution BE FORWARDED to the Brant County Health Unit, as well as the three MPs and three MPPs representing the County of Brant residents.*

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alysha Dyjach', written in a cursive style.

Alysha Dyjach
Director of Council Services, Clerk
County of Brant