



Family Violence Coordinating Council

Co-chairs:

Hon. Susan Robiner

Hon. Lloyd Zimmerman

Resolution that Court Funding Crisis Not Jeopardize Lives of Domestic Violence Victims

Be it resolved by the Fourth Judicial District Family Violence Coordinating Council serving Hennepin County:

Whereas domestic violence is a serious public safety concern affecting thousands of Minnesota families, and the current court budget crisis threatens the ability of the courts and related services to protect families, women, men, and children from harm;

Whereas the Family Violence Coordinating Council (FVCC) was created by Minnesota law to address issues of domestic violence, and to establish and promote interdisciplinary programs and initiatives to coordinate public and private legal and social services and law enforcement, prosecutorial and judicial activities;

Whereas members of the FVCC are appointed by the Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial District serving Hennepin County, and are recruited from a broad cross section of organizations and institutions in Hennepin County focused on domestic violence, including judges and administrators; probation and family court services; Hennepin County Sheriff's Office; Suburban Chiefs of Police Association; Hennepin County suburban prosecutors; Minneapolis City Attorney's Office; Hennepin County Attorney's Office; Hennepin County Public Defender; Office of the Guardian Ad Litem; Human Services and Public Health Department; Outfront Minnesota; WATCH; University of Minnesota Law School; Minnesota State Bar Association; the Domestic Abuse Service Center; Cornerstone; Sojourner Project; Casa de Esperanza; Tubman Family Alliance, Home Free; Domestic Fatality Review Team; Domestic Abuse Project; The Initiative for Violence Free Families; Phyllis Wheatley Community Center; Hennepin County Medical Center; and others;

Whereas domestic violence is a crisis affecting thousands of individuals in Minnesota, and according to recent statistics from the Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, nearly 58,566 Minnesota victims of domestic abuse and violence required advocacy services in one year alone, with 10,426 of these victims requiring emergency shelter;

Whereas the public policy of the State of Minnesota, reflected in a wide range of criminal and civil laws, speaks to the importance of protecting families and individuals from the ravaging effects of domestic violence, and of ensuring that the laws providing protection are vigorously enforced and not diminished;

Whereas Hennepin County is the largest judicial district in Minnesota, with domestic violence cases filed in court for the year 2008 involving at least 600 felonies, 588 gross misdemeanors, 3,318 misdemeanors, and 3,068 civil order for protection filings involving an imminent threat of harm to a partner or child which were received by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department for service;

Whereas, in the past 20 years, according to the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women's *Femicide Report*, an annual listing of domestic homicides compiled from news accounts and information provided by law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, court administrators, battered women's programs, and family members and friends of murder victims, in Hennepin County alone at least 136 women, 41 children, and six family members or friends have been murdered as a result of domestic violence;

Whereas, according to the most current Minnesota Crime Survey, domestic abuse victims account for over a quarter of all violent crimes – a conservative estimate in light of data from the Criminal Justice Statistics Center at Minnesota Planning that 83% of all domestic abuse victims do not report one or more occurrences to the police;

Whereas, in threatening and desperate economic times, the risk of domestic violence dramatically increases, exacerbating conditions which are ripe for domestic violence, and requiring more protection and greater resources, not less;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Family Violence Coordinating Council that it supports the Minnesota Judicial Council, the governing body for the State's courts, to secure adequate funding for the Courts; that it supports the efforts of the Hennepin County District Court to address problems in domestic violence through the court system including services to victims to ensure access to the courts; and that the Council urges the elected leadership of the State of Minnesota to protect and support the laws, institutions and programs that have taken years to develop, which protect victims of domestic violence and abuse, and which are at risk of being eliminated.

Unanimously adopted by the Council on March 12, 2009.

On behalf of the Council:



Hon. Lloyd B. Zimmerman, Fourth Judicial District
FVCC co-chair



Hon. Susan M. Robiner, Fourth Judicial District
FVCC co-chair