



Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee Windsor-Essex

vawccwe@gmail.com

Mayor Tracey Bailey
Town of Lakeshore
419 Notre Dame Street
Belle River, Ontario N0R 1A0

July 12, 2023

Mayor Bailey,

Our local Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee Windsor Essex (VAWCCWE) requests your support in declaring Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic in Windsor and Essex County. The VAWCCWE is a cross-sectorial committee comprised of community-based organizations that work together to provide a coordinated response for women experiencing violence and their children.

The Office of the Chief Coroner set forth 86 recommendations after the inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2022-coroners-inquests-verdicts-and-recommendations#section-4>). These recommendations are very important to the safety of women and children experiencing violence. Since October 2021, there have been four femicides in Windsor and Essex County and the number of intimate partner violent incidents are not decreasing. As a Committee, we hope to raise awareness of this complex social health issue and the numerous factors that need to be considered to help keep women and children safe.

Over 30 municipalities across Ontario have already declared Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic in their communities and we hope Essex County and the Town of Lakeshore will join them. This is an essential first step, as recommended in the Renfrew inquest and discussed in the Mass Casualty Commission's final report on April 18-19, 2020, in Nova Scotia (<https://masscasualtycommission.ca/>). Given your leadership role, we ask that you support our local VAWCCWE in taking steps towards the systemic change that needs to occur in Canada to best protect those at risk. We also welcome the opportunity for future discussions on ways to support survivors through the integration of services in town planning and the ongoing collaboration required to address violence and femicide in our community.

We acknowledge that the province of Ontario rejected the idea of formally declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic, based on the definition of the word. However, research and documentation has shown that Intimate Partner Violence is a pervasive social and public health issue that has significant consequences for victims, their families, and the communities in which they live. We appreciate your advocacy and look forward to speaking with you further.

Sincerely,

Members of the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee Windsor-Essex (VAWCCWE).

*The VAWCCWE is a member of Building a Bigger Wave <http://www.buildingabiggerwave.org/> (the provincial organization) and the Southwest Regional Coordinating Committee (SWRCC). Information available under VAWCCWE at <https://hiatushouse.com/about-us/#tab-625aad90bbfdd-7> or <https://www.facebook.com/VAWCCWE/>.