Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – June 15, 2022

REPORTS

Item No. 9 Support for Bill C-233

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 24, 2022, the Riel Community Committee recommended that the Executive Policy Committee and Council:

1. Put on record its support of Member of Parliament Anju Dhillon's Private Member's Bill C-233, Page 3 of Motion Memorandum that will raise the level of education on domestic violence and coercive control for federally appointed Judges.

2. Direct the Winnipeg Public Service to create a letter to the appropriate Minister, which calls upon the House of Commons to support Bill C-233.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 24, 2022, the Riel Community Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS violence against Women and Children is a Canadian public health crisis that demands urgent action;

AND WHEREAS one in four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime - one woman or girl is killed every other day, on average, somewhere in Canada;

AND WHEREAS In 2013, Winnipeg was selected as the first city in Canada to join the United Nations Global Safe Cities Initiative to reduce sexual violence against women and girls. The Safe Cities Initiative supports innovative approaches to preventing and reducing harassment and sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces;

AND WHEREAS danger for a woman increases in abuse when she separates from an abusive partner. According to research from the United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, when there is a history of coercive control, violence and a recent separation, a woman's risk of domestic homicide increases 900 times;

AND WHEREAS the impacts of COVID-19 and isolation has only exacerbated the domestic violence crisis. Women's shelters and crisis centres have reported an uptick in requests for services over the last two years. Additionally, the concerns for children remain significant;

AND WHEREAS According to recent research from Children's Hospital across the country, doctors have treated more than double the number of infants with serious injuries than previous to 2020. These include head injuries, broken bones or in some cases death;

AND WHEREAS the current Canadian court system is not equipped to protect women or children enduring domestic abuse. According to the National Judicial Institute, there is no mandatory education for Judges on domestic violence. Judges need education on what constitutes as domestic violence or coercive control. A formal education program would ensure another line of defense to protect victims, as well as preventing violence and abuse before it happens;

AND WHEREAS according to Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children must be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child." Our current family justice system often fails our children in this regard;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

AND WHEREAS in worst case scenarios, children are killed as a result of violent parental figures. As reported by the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative, recent separation and domestic violence are the two biggest risk factors that lead to domestic violence related child homicides;

AND WHEREAS custody disputes are an additional risk factor. Each year in Canada, about 30 children are killed by a parent. Mothers are responsible for about 40 per cent of the time, often related to postpartum depression or mental health issues. In the 60 per cent of cases where fathers are the murderers, anger, jealousy or post-separation retaliatory revenge are the usual motivations;

AND WHEREAS Keira's Law is named after four-year-old Keira Kagan, who was killed while in the custody of her father, in 2020;

AND WHEREAS voting in favour of "Keira's Law", contained in Private Member's Bill C-233, will not only protect victims of violence and children, it will save lives by amending the Judges Act to establish seminars and required training for judges on the intimate behavior pertaining to partner violence and coercive control'

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Riel Community Committee recommends that the Executive Policy Committee and Council:

1. Put on record its support of Member of Parliament Anju Dhillon's Private Member's Bill C-233, Page 3 of Motion Memorandum that will raise the level of education on domestic violence and coercive control for federally appointed Judges.

2. Direct the Winnipeg Public Service to create a letter to the appropriate Minister, which calls upon the House of Commons to support Bill C-233.