DATE

NAME OF MAYOR/COUNCILLOR
ADDRESS
CITY, PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

Dear Mayor/Councillor [INSERT NAME OF MAYOR/CITY COUNCILLOR],

I am writing in support of a national call for gender-based and intimate partner violence to be recognized as the epidemic that it is. **I urge you to sign onto this call to action by declaring gender-based and intimate partner violence an epidemic in [JURISDICTION].** This action is needed to generate awareness of the crisis within our community and develop common, evidence-informed strategies alongside other communities to work in unity to eliminate it. The urgency of this matter has once again been tragically confirmed by the case of intimate partner violence that occurred on October 23 in Sault Ste. Marie, where a man with a history of intimate partner violence shot and killed three children and one woman, and injured another.

Gender-based violence victimizes women and girls—particularly Indigenous, rural, racialized, newcomer, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and disabled women and girls—in every community:

* **A woman or girl is killed every 48 hours in Canada.** These women and girls are disproportionately killed by men they know, most often a partner or family member (#CallItFemicide, 2022).
* In 2018, **44% of women** who had been in an intimate partner relationship had experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. This figure increases to **61% for Indigenous women** and **67% for LGB+ women** (What is Gender-Based Violence?, 2022).
* Rates of intimate partner violence were almost **twice as high for rural women than urban women** in Canadian provinces in 2019 (What is Gender-Based Violence?, 2022).
* Data collected in 2018 shows **one third of women were sexually assaulted** at some point since the age of 15. One third of women also experienced unwanted sexual behaviours in a public place that made them feel unsafe or uncomfortable in the previous year (What is Gender-Based Violence?, 2022).

Gender-based violence is a human rights violation that takes many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and cyber violence. Perpetrators use tactics such as harassment, stalking, assault, and emotional and economic abuse to control, coerce, and intimidate women and girls. This violence not only exerts serious harm on victims, but also has ripple effects throughout communities, especially on children who witness the violence. It also perpetuates a culture of misogyny that has significant impacts on women and girls’ ability to engage freely and equally in society.

Both **the Mass Casualty Commission on the 2020 shooting in Nova Scotia and the Renfrew County Inquest recommended governments formally declare gender-based and intimate partner violence an epidemic.** Several cities—including Toronto, Ottawa, and Windsor—have already made such declarations. In support of the national campaign, I hope you will consider declaring gender-based and intimate partner violence an epidemic in [JURISDICTION]. I also urge you to **help bring this issue to the attention of our community** through educational programs and actions to reduce violence, such as:

* Addressing the root causes of violence by advancing gender equality, promoting social inclusion within municipal policy, and combating discrimination against Indigenous, racialized, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals in your community.
* Supporting those at risk in developing personal safety plans.
* Educating and engaging men and boys about gender-based violence and how to prevent it.
* Creating an action plan to prevent child maltreatment and adverse childhood experiences.
* Developing accessible violence treatment programs for abusers.
* Building the capacity of each citizen to be an active bystander and challenge the normalization of violence and inequality within their spheres of influence. This approach will send a strong message to perpetrators throughout the city that gender-based violence is not acceptable.

Sincerely,

[NAME]