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2 By Supervisors Taylor, Clancy, Goodwin, Sr., and Wasserman
3

4 **A RESOLUTION**
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6 Recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, encouraging support of
7 domestic violence prevention measures throughout Milwaukee County, and requesting
8 the implementation of a Purple Alert system in the state of Wisconsin
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11 WHEREAS, the National Domestic Violence Hotline defines domestic violence
12 (also called intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, or relationship abuse) as a
13 pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another
14 partner in an intimate relationship; and
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16 WHEREAS, the range of behaviors that encompasses domestic violence
17 includes physical violence, sexual violence, coercion and threats, intimidation,
18 emotional abuse, isolation, minimizing, denying, and blaming, using male privilege,
19 economic abuse, and using children as a tool to carry out any of the aforementioned
20 behaviors; and
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22 WHEREAS, domestic violence is typically seen between male and female
23 relationships, where the male is the perpetrator of the abuse, but domestic violence can
24 occur between couples of the same gender, with the female as the perpetrator, at any
25 age, at any socioeconomic status, and any relationship status; and
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27 WHEREAS, one of the reasons why domestic violence can be so dangerous for
28 victims, is that abusive relationships are extremely difficult to end for many reasons,
29 including fear, believing abusive behavior is normal, embarrassment or shame, cultural
30 or religious reasons, immigration status, lack of financial freedom, and love; and
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32 WHEREAS, the National Domestic Violence Hotline estimates that, on average,
33 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate
34 partner in the United States and females age 18 to 34 generally experience the highest
35 rates of intimate partner violence; and
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37 WHEREAS, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates that
38 domestic violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime and the presence of a gun
39 in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of death by 500 percent; and

40 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, in a May 2020 article, describes
41 how Milwaukee has seen a dramatic increase in homicides this year and, as of May
42 2020, there were 56 victims compared to 26 victims by the same time last year; and
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44 WHEREAS, more than 40 percent of those 2020 homicides were related to
45 domestic or family violence; and
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47 WHEREAS, the HOPE Domestic Violence Homicide Help website details a stark
48 increase in incidences of domestic violence throughout Wisconsin, with the yearly death
49 rate trending towards 107 deaths, although the average is usually approximately 77
50 deaths; and
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52 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is one factor contributing to this increase
53 due to isolation in homes with abusers, increased unemployment, and increased stress
54 and anxiety; and
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56 WHEREAS, the National Domestic Violence Hotline explains that, between
57 March 16 and April 26, nearly 4,500 callers to the hotline cited COVID-19 as a condition
58 of their experience; and
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60 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has also prevented the deployment of
61 certain services to assist victims, including home visits; and
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63 WHEREAS, the Sojourner Family Peace Center was forced to stop home visits
64 during the height of the crisis, but has begun to reinstate visits to those who are at
65 highest risk of homicide throughout Milwaukee; and
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67 WHEREAS, home visits are critical because they provide a personal, human
68 connection to a potential victim without the fear of arrest or eviction; and
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70 WHEREAS, in 2016, Milwaukee County first recognized October as Domestic
71 Violence Awareness Month through File No. 16-622 and partnered with local community
72 groups working to prevent domestic violence; and
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74 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has worked closely with the Sojourner Family
75 Peace Center, and other local domestic violence prevention groups, to disperse
76 resources to the community through implementation of Federal Domestic Violence
77 grants, the creation of Victim Advocate positions through the District Attorney's Office,
78 and contracting with The Alma Center for case management and treatment services in
79 the Domestic Violence Diversion and Deferred Prosecution program, amongst other
80 initiatives; and

81 WHEREAS, community organizations, such as Fresh Start Learning, Mahogany
82 Cares, and Community Taskforce Milwaukee, are critical in raising awareness about the
83 prevalence of domestic violence and provide vital services to the community in the form
84 of housing, counseling, legal services, medical services, and the provision of needed
85 supplies, amongst other initiatives; and

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87 WHEREAS, the 2020 Adopted Budget includes \$100,000 for the Department of
88 Health and Human Services Housing Division to assist homeless victims of domestic
89 violence with emergency shelter options; and

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91 WHEREAS, according to a February 2020 report in File No. 20-230, the Housing
92 Division will be working with the Office of Corporation Counsel to establish a master
93 lease program that would allow instant access to safe housing until they can find
94 permanent housing and it is estimated that more than 100 referrals may be made to this
95 program; and

96
97 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County partners with other municipal governments,
98 including the City of Milwaukee, to provide essential services to victims and help lower
99 the homicide rate related to domestic violence; and

100
101 WHEREAS, law enforcement agencies across the United States employ alert
102 system to notify the public about timely, important information, including AMBER Alerts
103 for missing or endangered children and Silver Alerts for missing or endangered elderly
104 individuals; and

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106 WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin was the first state to introduce a Green Alert
107 for missing or endangered veterans; and

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109 WHEREAS, a Purple Alert system for missing or endangered victims of domestic
110 violence, including those who have restraining orders against their abusers, would
111 assist in notifying the public to these emergencies; and

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113 WHEREAS, there are currently no states that employ a Purple Alert system for
114 missing or endangered victims of domestic violence and the state of Wisconsin would
115 benefit from this type of notification system; and

116
117 WHEREAS, domestic violence is a widespread crime that has no prejudice; and

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119 WHEREAS, domestic violence is a community issue that effects all cities, towns,
120 and villages that comprise Milwaukee County; and

121 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified the frequency of
122 domestic violence in our community and will continue to do so as Wisconsin battles
123 increased positive cases of the virus and economic uncertainty; and
124

125 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County continues to support those in domestic violence
126 situations and seeks to prevent the occurrence of further harm or death; and
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128 WHEREAS, the Committee on Health and Human Needs, at its meeting of
129 October 28, 2020, recommended File No. 20-763 for adoption (vote 3-0); now,
130 therefore,
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132 BE IT RESOLVED, that October will annually be recognized as Domestic
133 Violence Awareness Month in Milwaukee County; and
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135 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Milwaukee County supports domestic
136 violence prevention measures throughout the community through the provision of
137 services and partnership with local community groups; and
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139 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
140 supports the creation of a Purple Alert system both in the state of Wisconsin and the
141 United States to alert the public to missing or endangered victims of domestic violence;
142 and
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144 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
145 hereby authorizes and requests that the Office of Government Affairs staff communicate
146 the contents of this resolution to appropriate individuals in the state of Wisconsin
147 Legislature and Congressional Delegation.
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149

150 10/28/20

151 S:\Committees\2020\Oct\HHN\Resolutions\20-763 October as Domestic Violence month and purple alert.docx