

State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, each year, domestic violence impacts thousands of New Yorkers regardless of age, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic, immigration, or housing status; it is a crime that is anathema to our civil society, causing untold physical, emotional, and psychological suffering for adults and children, their families, and their communities; and

Whereas, the incidence of domestic violence remained prevalent in New York State in 2019, with police reporting more than 28,000 cases of assault by intimate partners outside of the five boroughs; with courts entering more than 237,000 orders of protection into the Order of Protection Registry; and, with New York State domestic violence and sexual assault hotlines receiving over 320,000 contacts; and

Whereas, New York State is the only state in the country with an executive-level agency, the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, dedicated to preventing domestic violence and improving response to victims; and

Whereas, the domestic violence programs statewide provided a range of essential services, including residential services to nearly 12,800 adults and children and non-residential services to more than 40,000 adults and children in 2019; and

Whereas, New York State continues to lead the nation in enacting laws that enhance safety for victims of domestic violence and that hold perpetrators of such violence accountable for their behavior; and

Whereas, these laws permit judges to consider domestic violence when ordering spousal support and issuing sentences and orders of protection; provide workplace protections for victims of domestic violence; require hospitals to develop written domestic violence policies; expand the social services definition of "victim" so that more people can receive domestic violence services; simplify the language in the Victim Rights Notice that law enforcement, courts, and prosecutors must provide to all victims of domestic violence; permit a victim of domestic violence to recover economic damages from parties who are found legally responsible for failing to obey or enforce orders of protection; extend the time a victim may file a civil suit to recover damages for domestic violence-related injuries; and allow victims of domestic violence to terminate a lease without penalty without an order of protection; and

Whereas, there is an undeniable connection between domestic abuse and deadly gun violence, and New York State has the strongest gun control laws in the country, including one which requires domestic abusers to surrender all firearms, not just handguns, and legislation that allows municipalities to grant local and state law enforcement broader access to an individual's information on a firearm license application if it is requested, so that when an officer responds to a domestic violence call, they know whether or not they are entering a home where a firearm is present; and

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought increased risks to domestic violence victims confined at home with their abuser, and law enforcement and domestic violence service providers report a significant increase in the number of domestic violence cases, with the New York State Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline recording a 33% increase in calls for April 2020 as compared to April 2019, and shelter occupancy rates upstate rising to 78% in April 2020 as compared to 59% in April 2019; and

Whereas, in response to this alarming trend, New York State convened a COVID-19 Domestic Violence Task Force comprised of state and national advocates and leaders, added a text/chat function to the statewide hotline, and developed a statewide social media campaign to inform the public about available resources and services; and

Whereas, New Yorkers are united in offering unequivocal support during this month-long observance to the victims of domestic violence and the work of public and private entities striving to provide them with the best possible services, while sending a clear message to abusers that such crimes will never be tolerated;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim October 2020 as

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

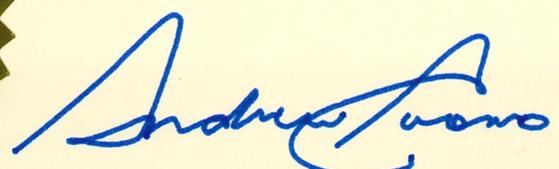
in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-third day of September in the year two thousand twenty.



Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa



Governor