

Motion on Advancing a Gender-Based Violence Prevention Strategy

Thank you, Mayor and Council.

Today, we are not simply voting on a motion.
We are writing a line in the history of this city.

Because a city is not defined by its skyline, or its slogans,
but by who feels safe to live, walk, work, dream, and grow here.

And today, we ask, plainly and without hesitation,
whether the women and girls of Vancouver will inherit a city that protects them,
or a city that asks them to carry their safety alone.

We are not just seeing a rise in violence, we are watching a rollback of the protections
women fought for across generations.

Fourteen women have been killed in Vancouver since last November.
Their names are not here,
but their absence is.
It fills this room more than any debate.

Every day in Vancouver, a girl walks home scanning shadows.

Violence against women is rising while equality recedes.
Progress is not guaranteed, it is defended, or it disappears.
Every day, a woman counts exits, counts minutes, counts risks.
Every day, someone decides whether leaving violence means safety, or homelessness, or
fear, or worse.

That is not public safety.
That is survival.
And survival is not the standard to which great cities hold their people.

This motion does not punish.
It does not divide.
It does not look backward.

It calls us to act with integrity, for coordination, responsibility, and courage.
It is a call for leadership at a critical moment in our shared history.

And if, as we anticipate, this motion does not pass,
let us be absolutely clear about what will be remembered.

Women, Survivors showed up, Community stood here and told the truth.

We asked not for privilege, but for protection.
Not for speeches, but for safety.
Not for sympathy, but for strategy.

Not for declarations but for action

And if the response to this moment is procedural delay or political comfort...
the record will reflect that too.

Because history always notes who acted,
and who waited.
Who led,
and who looked away.

To the women and girls of Vancouver...
You are not an afterthought.
Your life is not negotiable.
Your future is not optional.
We will keep building safety as infrastructure
with or without formal mandate,
with or without unanimous consent,
with or without the political courage in this room today.

To the girl walking home today who does not know this vote is happening
may she inherit a city that fought for her even when the vote was lost.
Because we do not need unanimity to move history.
We only need those willing to stand when it is hardest to stand.

Council, I say this with steadiness and without hostility:

Leadership is a choice made in moments just like this.
And long after this vote,
long after this chamber empties,
long after the headlines fade,
the people of this city, and the record of this city, will remember who chose safety,
and who chose silence.

We are not here for promises.
We are here for proof.

Thank you.

Delivered on November 5, 2025 by Angela Marie MacDougall, Executive Director, BWSS
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