

Resolution 7: Protection of Women in Politics, Especially Women of Color

Sponsored by Rep. Sonya Harper, Illinois

Protection of Women in Politics, Especially Women of Color

WHEREAS, women in politics face disproportionate levels of harassment, intimidation, and violence compared to their male counterparts, with women of color experiencing the highest levels of targeted threats, both in person and online, according to recent national studies; and

WHEREAS, women of color serving in public office encounter unique barriers rooted in the intersection of racism and sexism, including discriminatory treatment, threats to personal safety, and deliberate attempts to silence or delegitimize their voices; and

WHEREAS, historically, black leaders—from Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Ida B. Wells, to Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan—have carried forward the struggle to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized populations are heard in government, often at great personal sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, present-day women legislators continue that legacy by advancing policies that address systemic inequities in healthcare, education, housing, economic opportunity, criminal justice, and voting rights, despite enduring heightened personal and professional risks; and

WHEREAS, the persistence of threats, harassment, and institutional bias discourages women of color from pursuing or sustaining careers in public service, thereby limiting the full representative nature of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, national and international human rights frameworks, including the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Politics, recognize the right of women, particularly those representing historically marginalized communities, to participate fully, equally, and safely in political and public life; and

WHEREAS, strengthening protections for women in politics; including legislative safeguards, institutional reforms, security protocols, accountability measures, and cultural change, is necessary to protect democracy, ensure equitable representation, and advance justice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the **National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women)** calls for comprehensive measures to increase the protection of women in politics, particularly women of color, from harassment, intimidation, discrimination and violence in all forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that **NOBEL Women** urges the following specific policy actions at all levels of government:

1. Federal Action

- Passage of legislation directing the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security to track, investigate, and prosecute threats, harassment, and acts of political violence targeting women in elected office, with disaggregated data by race and gender.
- Creation of a federal grant program to support enhanced security measures for women legislators and candidates, including cybersecurity, staff training, and safe district office protocols.
- Expansion of the *Violence Against Women Act* to explicitly include protections for women in public office facing gender- or race-based political violence.

2. State and Local Action

- Adoption of model legislation requiring state legislatures and local governing bodies to establish formal anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that specifically protect women legislators and staff.
- Allocation of state and local funds for security resources (e.g., panic buttons, cybersecurity tools, protective details where warranted) for elected officials facing credible threats.
- Development of independent reporting and accountability mechanisms within legislative bodies for addressing harassment and intimidation of women lawmakers.

3. Technology and Media Accountability

- Enforcement of stronger regulations requiring social media companies to identify, remove, and report coordinated disinformation campaigns, hate speech, and threats targeting women of color in politics.
- Creation of public-private partnerships between governments, civil rights organizations, and media platforms to monitor, respond to, and reduce online harassment campaigns.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOBEL Women recommits itself to uplifting, protecting, and supporting women of color in public life, ensuring their ability to lead without fear, intimidation, or systemic obstruction, in honor of the legacy of those who paved the way and in service of future generations of leaders.

Submitted by Rep. Sonya Marie Harper