



October 6, 2022

Dear Councilmember Arthur,

I write this letter in strong support for the measure that would allocate free hotel rooms for crime victims to provide for their safety and stability.

### **Mission and Background of the Office for Women**

The Office for Women was founded in 1991 with a singular mission of elevating the status of women through education advocacy and legislation. The Office for Women has seven areas of focus: gender based violence, human trafficking, social and economic well being, housing, education, civic engagement, and autonomy. Historically, this office has worked to convene partners to develop model responses to domestic violence, human trafficking and gender-based violence. The OFW also informs legislative efforts on gender based violence, including most recently an ordinance limiting hotel rooms from renting by the hour and creating a fund for housing for youth and an ordinance granting paid leave to victims of domestic violence and other crimes.

### **Access to Housing is Critical to Prevent Gender-Based Violence**

Women fleeing domestic violence and human trafficking often need access to emergency housing and stability. Access to emergency housing or shelter also plays a critical role in preventing individuals from becoming victims of domestic violence and human trafficking in the first place.

### **Louisville Lacks Adequate Emergency Housing for Victims of Crime**

The Office for Women receives frequent calls from victims of domestic violence who are seeking emergency or long-term shelter. Unfortunately, often there is a waitlist at the Center for Women and Families, the region's domestic violence center. There is no overnight shelter for women in Louisville, and women often face a risk of sexual assault or abuse at mixed-gender shelters. There is a desperate need for additional beds, even on a temporary basis, for victims of gender based violence and other crime.

Allocating hotel beds for crime victims would be a critical tool in preventing and responding to gender based violence and other crime in Louisville.

For these reasons, the Office for Women offers our full support for this measure.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Hunt, JD (she/her/hers)

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