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Member Agencies

Blackstone Valley
Advocacy Center
Domestic Violence
Resource Center of
South County
Elizabeth Buffum
Chace Center
Women's Resource Center

Task Force

Sisters Overcoming
Abusive Relationships

Affiliate Members

Center for Southeast Asians
Crossroads Rhode Island
Family Service of Rhode Island
McAuley Ministries –
McAuley Village
Progreso Latino
YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative Marvin L. Abney, Chair of the House Finance Committee
Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: May 15, 2024

Re: **Support for House Bill 7255**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) appreciates this opportunity to express our **strong support for House Bill 7255**. This legislation would require every individual or group health insurance contract effective on or after January 1, 2025, to provide coverage to the insured and the insured's spouse and dependents for all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and other products.

Restricting any access to reproductive health services and choices places particularly dangerous burdens on victims of domestic and sexual violence. Victims of domestic violence are at a significantly higher risk for unintended pregnancy because partners who use violence will often sabotage or interfere with their partner's birth control in an attempt to exercise control over their reproductive decisions. In a 2010 study conducted jointly by the University of California-Davis School of Medicine and the Harvard School of Public Health, researchers found that at least 35% of domestic violence victims reported reproductive control by their abusive partner either by contraception interference or coercion to become pregnant.¹

Restrictions that complicate access to contraception, or which make such access prohibitively expensive, provide additional leverage for people who use violence to use in order to threaten, trick, or intimidate their victims into continuing with an unwanted pregnancy. The legislature should act to ensure that all Rhode Islanders, regardless of their health insurance carrier, have safe and affordable access to the reproductive health and contraception options they need. This will deter and prevent unintended pregnancies by at-risk domestic violence victims who face additional danger when a pregnancy is added to a violent and abusive relationship.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. We urge you to support **House Bill 7255**.

¹ "Pregnancy Coercion, Intimate Partner Violence, and Unintended Pregnancy," Miller, et al. *Contraception*, Volume 81, Issue 4, 2010.