

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance Committee
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in support of H5390

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of Representative Craven's bill H5390, the Victims of Crime Trauma Informed Mobilization (VICTIM) Act.

My name is Alex Burch and I am the Volunteer and Development Manager for Sojourner House. For almost 5 years, I have been immersed in the world of nonprofit services for vulnerable populations and I can say with certainty, the need for organizations such as Sojourner House is not going away. For nearly 50 years, this organization has sought "to promote healthy relationships by providing culturally sensitive support, advocacy, housing, and education for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; and to effect systems change." Beginning as a part-time, volunteer run help hotline, the growth and need for such services as Sojourner House provides, has been notable. Beginning as strictly a domestic violence-based organization, we have grown into sexual assault and human trafficking focuses as well. The reason for this? Because it is necessary. Because the individuals and families that are seeking support are not diminishing and it is our responsibility as those that have the resources to provide the tools for those seeking safety.

So why might you ask should funding for victim services be a priority? Because victims and survivors deserve to be a priority. As a part of the Sojourner House's Values Statement, we are "**committed to empowering** our staff and clients, by fostering **growth** and **resiliency** through **compassionate services** and effective **partnerships**, with a shared **vision** of **community**." Although yes, there is so much that can be done with the grace of the human person, the fundamental need for funding that allows for the growth of these services does not go unnoticed. The needs for these resources are constant and in order to continue to remain growing alongside the clients, we must be able to continue to expand and have a stable form of foundation that enables us to continue with our services.

Just as we are committed to those that we serve, we ask that you are committed to the mission of the organization and ensure that we can continue to meet the needs.

Please pass the Victims of Crime Trauma Informed Mobilization Act this year.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony. Please contact me at aburch@sojournerri.org if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Burch