

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Jazmin Rodriguez <jrodriguez@sojournerri.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 24, 2025 11:31 AM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Shannon McDonnell  
**Subject:** Written Testimony in Support of H5390

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 Jazmin Rodriguez and I work as a Housing Navigator at Sojourner House. I currently live in Providence, RI. I wanted to emphasize the importance of Victim Services in our state. Through the victim services we provide in our organization, we have been able to house dozens of individuals, both men and women, including their young children, who were fleeing abuse. They have been able to feel safe in a home that isn't dilapidated and in poor condition. They have also been able to turn their lives around and find jobs with the help of their advocates.

But we need more help. Our housing clinic fills up quickly when it is open. We cannot provide emergency shelter for everyone who needs it. One of my own close friends was beaten by her partner. She went to Sojourner House Housing Clinic but was unable to be placed in a shelter because there was no room left. She was forced to go back to her abuser. She still hasn't been able to receive the help she needs and is currently living between her car and Airbnb's when she has the money. She has been forced to disperse her children among relatives. She used to be one of my own tenants. She is smart, resourceful, and resilient. But she still needs help. Unfortunately, all she can do is wait to see when she could possibly receive some sort of assistance because the lack of funds restricts our ability to help more people.

So imagine how scared our current clients are as they hear about the continuous funding cuts gushing out of the news media. They constantly ask "Will my rent get paid this month?" "Will I lose my assistance?" These are vulnerable people who have had their lives destroyed by the hands of abusers and facilitators of that abuse who are now worried that the helping hand who is trying to get them stand on their own two feet is also being taken away. When even the least fortunate among our residents are well taken care of, both our cities' and our state's overall quality of life improves. They are able to prosper and grow. Like one of our clients who was in shelter, recovering from drug abuse and running from domestic violence. She had her son and desperately wanted a better life for him. But her record and lack of employment made that impossible. Through our victim services and the help of her advocate and myself, she was able to secure a unit in a brand new building. Once housed, she participated in job training that allowed her to land a job. Only 2 months into

the job, she is now the manager. She is planning to continue her career and wants to become the regional manager for the store she currently works in. This wouldn't have happened without the help we provided her. She can now stand on her own, needing minimum support from our services and from the state services she qualifies for.

The V.I.C.T.I.M.S. Act would allow us to create more stories like hers.

**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 401-400-0495 if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

Jazmin Rodriguez  
22 Brattle St  
Providence RI 02907

Thanks,

Jazmin Rodriguez  
Housing Navigator  
Sojourner House  
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*Committed to Ending Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence & Trafficking*