



Women's Resource Center

WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITY TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Chair Abney
House Finance Committee
Re: Support of H5390

Dear Chair Abney and members of the committee,

The Women's Resource Center writes in strong support of Representative Craven's VICTIM Act, H5390 which would ensure that the over 42,000 victims in Rhode Island continue to have access to life saving victim services.

Founded in 1977, the mission of the Women's Resource Center (WRC) is to empower survivors by providing trauma-informed services with equity and compassion while working collaboratively with the community to eliminate the root causes of interpersonal abuse. The WRC has a long history of providing a full range of compassionate, comprehensive direct services exclusively to survivors of domestic violence. We provide services throughout the East Bay region of Rhode Island including Newport County, Bristol County, and the City of East Providence. For many years we have received VOCA funding through the Department of Public Safety, which we use to serve 550 survivors of violence.

We have consistently seen these funds going down as federal funding wanes. These VOCA dollars are only federal pass through funds and Rhode Island currently spends almost no state funds on victims.

At the same time, Rhode Island spends approximately \$7,800 per prisoner each year. By allocating just 10% of that amount— about \$750—toward supporting each of the state's 42,000 victims, Rhode Island could commit \$30 million to vital victim services.

Representative Craven's bill, H5390 the VICTIM Act, would create this grant pool of \$30 Million to fund supportive programming for the victims and survivors we work with each day.

Nearly one in two Rhode Islanders experiences domestic violence in their lifetime. The Women's Resource Center helps survivors of abuse achieve safety and rebuild their lives after victimization: our advocates accompany clients to court to request protective orders, case managers support clients in our residential program move from emergency shelter, to transitional housing, to permanent housing. Our counselors are there for victims as they navigate what is for many the darkest time in their lives. As federal funding for these programs hangs in the balance, these services are at risk of elimination without significant, overdue investment at the state level.

We urge you to join those states and add victim funding into the FY26 budget by passing H5390.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter,

Jessica Walsh
Executive Director

Our phones are safe - no caller I.D. - all outgoing calls blocked • Member of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence