

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 Justine Mainville Pagano and I serve as the Violence Prevention & Education Manager at Sojourner House. I'm a homeowner in Providence, Rhode Island and a survivor of an 11 year long abusive relationship. I know firsthand the struggles that victims experience when living through and leaving abuse. From finding a safe place to live, to finding an affordable mental health professional to guide them through the darkest days - none of it is easy. It's hard enough to live in this state right now and to live without safety, security and compassion is just hope-shattering.

Every week, I watch my colleagues run a housing clinic. They help every person who walks through our doors navigate complicated and crowded systems just to have a safe place to sleep. Our shelter beds are constantly full. Our waiting lists are long. Something's got to give, and we all know there are simply not enough resources. Federal cuts are threatening our already scarce resources - and if we think that Rhode Island is facing a housing crisis now, we are going to see a flood of unhoused adults and children if we don't act swiftly and decisively .

We cannot create communities without violence without addressing this basic needs deficit. Everyone deserves a place to live, food to eat and a government that cares about their well-being. Agencies like ours see the impacts of victim services work - including educating the population about abuse - every day.

**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 978-944-0239 if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

Justine Mainville Pagano  
51 Laban St. | Providence, RI 02909

