

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 Maria Haces, and I serve as the Human Trafficking Services Coordinator at Sojourner House. I am also a proud resident of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.
- Victim services are a vital lifeline for survivors of human trafficking, often serving as the bridge to critical resources such as shelter, counseling, housing, and individualized advocacy. Through the work we do at Sojourner House, I have personally witnessed the transformative impact of these services. One of my clients was able to escape her abuser and find safe shelter for herself and her children. Another survivor accessed counseling and housing support, allowing her to regain stability and return to work.
- Despite our efforts, the need far exceeds our capacity. Sojourner House is currently the only human trafficking shelter in Rhode Island, and we have only **seven beds** available. This is simply not enough. We are often forced to make heartbreaking decisions—choosing between a mother with two children and a single new mother—because we do not have the space to serve everyone. It is unfair and unsustainable.
- During our Housing Clinic, we frequently meet clients who are desperately trying to flee abusive situations. The lack of available housing leaves us powerless to help them find a safe place to go. It is deeply frustrating and disheartening.
- Federal funding cuts would have a devastating impact. Without this support, we cannot provide rental assistance to families of four or ensure food security for clients who are temporarily unemployed and rebuilding their lives. These are not abstract numbers—these are real people depending on our help.
- I urge you to recognize the critical importance of this funding and the direct impact it has on survivors in our state. Please support and pass this bill—for the safety, dignity, and future of our clients.

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 401-2707998 if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

Maria Haces
81 Park Pl Pawtucket RI 02860