

April 24, 2025

Re: In Support of H5390 – Establishing the VICTIM Fund Grant Program

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF) and our forty-four member organizations serving and advocating for vulnerable children, youth, and families across the state, I write to express our strong support for H5390 – the Victims of Crime Trauma Informed Mobilization (VICTIM) Act.

Each year, approximately 42,000 Rhode Islanders receive victim services. These include emergency shelter, forensic examinations, hotline/crisis counseling, housing supports, counseling, and advocacy—delivered by dedicated, trauma-informed nonprofit providers operating under immense financial strain. Yet despite the rising need for these critical services, Rhode Island invests little to no state funding in victim support, relying instead on federal VOCA funding that has become increasingly unstable and insufficient. In fact, last year alone, VOCA funding was slashed by 40%, leaving providers struggling to meet escalating demand.

H5390 would invest \$30 million in a new VICTIM Fund grant program, a targeted, smart, and compassionate step forward. This fund would help sustain and expand access to essential, life-saving services for victims of crime—services that not only help individuals and families heal, but also prevent further violence and reduce long-term costs to emergency services, the health care system, and the criminal justice system.

To put this investment in perspective: Rhode Island spends roughly \$7,800 per prisoner each year. Dedicating just 10% of that amount—\$750 per victim—would yield a \$30 million investment in the well-being and resilience of survivors.

Children and families served by RICCF members often experience the long-term effects of violence and trauma. The services supported by this bill are provided by RICCF members and partners and are essential to helping survivors rebuild their lives. Investing in a stable, well-funded network of victim service providers is an investment in public safety, health, and the long-term stability of our communities.

We urge your support for H5390 and thank you for your continued commitment to protecting and uplifting Rhode Island's children, youth, and families.

Sincerely,



Tanja Kubas-Meyer
Executive Director