



April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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 write in strong support of Representative Craven's bill H5390, the Victims of Crime Trauma Informed Mobilization (VICTIM) Act.

For 48 years, Sojourner House, a non-profit based in Providence but now providing services across the state, has served thousands of victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. We offer wraparound services such as support groups, emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. Since our founding in 1976, we've helped more than 60,000 survivors of abuse on their journey to emotional and economic stability.

We write today as part of a coalition of 26 organizations advocating for a dedicated line item for victim services in the state budget. These organizations serve over 42,000 victims annually, yet the state has not allocated funding to support these vital programs, instead relying on federal funding.

Most other states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut, invest state funds in victim service programs. It is time that Rhode Island joins these other states and prioritize the 42,000 victims at a small fraction of the cost that we spend on our prisoners.

We believe this is a solid investment in the future of Rhode Islanders. We know the cost of intimate partner violence can be over \$100,000 for a victim in terms of lost wages, mental health and health care. Our programs reduce those costs and help break the cycle of violence

#### **SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF CRIME IS A SMART INVESTMENT**

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.

This targeted \$30 million investment would dramatically enhance service providers' capacity to meet the needs of their clients. Spending on victim services has an exponential impact, benefiting not only the individual victims but also their families and communities. This makes it a smart, socially responsible investment, one that yields both moral and practical returns.

---

386 Smith Street | Providence, RI 02908

Drop-in Center: 401.861.6191 | Fax: 401.861.6157 | Housing Office: 401.808.6889

Helplines: 401.765.3232 | 401.658.4334 | Web: [www.sojournerri.org](http://www.sojournerri.org)



since the vast majority of DV victims also have young children.

As federal funds wain, we are seeing increased need as more and more individuals seek our services. It's time for Rhode Island to invest in these life-saving programs, as other states have, to reduce future costs and break the cycle of violence. **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 [Vvolz@Sojournerri.org](mailto:Vvolz@Sojournerri.org) if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Volz  
President & CEO

---

386 Smith Street | Providence, RI 02908

Drop-in Center: 401.861.6191 | Fax: 401.861.6157 | Housing Office: 401.808.6889

Helplines: 401.765.3232 | 401.658.4334 | Web: [www.sojournerri.org](http://www.sojournerri.org)