



April 24, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903

Re: Support for S-5390 – VICTIM Act

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

The mission of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is to increase and preserve the supply of high-quality affordable homes across Rhode Island. We currently have a membership of 20 nonprofit organizations who build and operate long-term affordable homes throughout the state, several of whom also provide services to vulnerable Rhode Islanders, including victims of violence and abuse. We also serve as the backbone organization for Homes RI, a statewide coalition of more than 80 organizations who share our vision to increase the supply of safe, healthy and affordable homes. We recognize the essential role that comprehensive support services play in fostering housing stability, and I write in support of House Bill 5390.

H-5390 proposes the establishment of the VICTIM Fund grant program and represents an important step to enhance the continuum of care for people affected by crime and trauma. The funding that this bill seeks to allocate will bolster the capacity of community-based providers who serve diverse populations of abuse and violence survivors, leveraging existing resources and reinforcing the support network available to victims statewide.

We appreciate the General Assembly's continued efforts to address the connected challenges of housing stability and victimization. Initiatives like the VICTIM fund can contribute to broader systemic improvements that support individuals and families in achieving safe and stable housing outcomes – strengthening our communities in the process. We encourage passage of this bill and look forward to supporting ongoing collaboration with policymakers and community partners in advancing policies to promote safety and stability for all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melina" being more prominent than the last name "Lodge".

Melina Lodge, Executive Director
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