

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance Committee
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in support of H5323

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the committee,

I write in strong support Representative Casey's Joint Resolution to Support Sojourner House, H5323.

My name is Caely Flynn, and I am the Sexual Violence Program Coordinator at Sojourner House. I was born in Warwick, Rhode Island and after many travels I made it all the way back to raise my family there. I love this state so much, and I believe all the people contained within it deserve peace. My role primarily works with people who have experience sexual violence within their lifetime. The impact of interpersonal violence greatly affects the individual, and that inevitably extends out to families and wider communities. I am not speaking hyperbolically here, but the wraparound services we have been able to provide at Sojourner House have radically changed lives. From clinical therapy, to providing basic needs, to support groups, to rental assistance - all of these (either individually or coupled together) can break cycles of violence for good.

We tend to work quietly. We do not speak about clients' experiences publicly unless they choose to do so. The people who come through our doors are quite literally your friends, family members, co-workers, neighbors, and your childrens' friends. A child who is now able to be safe from an abusive parent can begin the journey to healing, and not repeat those behaviors. An adult who has lived in isolation for so long due to an abusive partner's tactics can now find community with peers in a clinical support group. An adult who has lived years of terror can now receive free legal representation to make sure their life will now be peaceful.

The current proposed cuts on the Federal level have created so much uncertainty. We cannot guarantee that our clients will continue to have access the ways in which they once did. The safety plans we have begun to have with our clients have now included paths unthinkable to most. It has shifted into more discussions of surviving, and not necessarily thriving. The allocation of these funds are not for strangers, but I guarantee it will be for someone you know personally. The allocation of these funds are an investment in a peaceful Rhode Island.

Please support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony. Please contact me at 401-432-6131 (cflynn@sojournerri.org) if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

Caely Flynn

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Warwick, RI 02888