

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 Esther Zami and I am a resident of West Warwick Rhode Island. I have been with Sojourner House for over a year as an Advocate working with primarily DCYF involved clients. Throughout that year I have watched first-hand how this agency has drastically changed the lives of my clients. I have a client who when I first met was unemployed and kicked out of the shelter she was staying at and had no where to go. We have helped her get housed, found a great job as a travel CNA and is now contacting RI housing for first time home buyer assistance for when she leaves the program. Because of Sojourner house she was able to find a place to feel safe, equipped to assist her in her need of housing, support for her DCYF children and encouragement to be independent and confident.

The impact that Federal cuts would have on my clients is not just about numbers on a sheet of paper but it's the difference between feeling trapped scared and helpless but knowing that there is a place that not only hears you but enable you to process through your trauma and difficulty and a chance at a new beginning which we all deserve.

We are a client centered agency and with that being said we go above and beyond getting clients housed. I meet my clients at whatever stage that they are in their lives. Sometimes that stage can be dark, scary, uncertain and just overwhelmed which sometimes leaves them feeling helpless. The amazing men and women who serve our clients are passionate about what they do. It's not often you are able to have a job and be passionate about it. We have an extraordinary leader as our CEO who has been fighting for this agency and this community relentlessly in order to better serve our clients.

Thus, times are hard and challenging. We need to firmly chose to make a difference in our community to help people rebuild their lives.

Thank you,

Esther Zami