



Conexion Latina Newport
170 Broadway Newport, RI 02840
401-585-8165

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,
My name is Rebekah Gomez and I am writing on behalf of Conexión Latina Newport in strong support of Representative Casey's Joint Resolution to Support Sojourner House, H5323.

Conexión Latina is a grassroots organization serving Spanish speakers on Aquidneck Island, and sadly we have been challenged many cases of domestic violence and human trafficking, neither of which we are experts in, or equipped to handle. We have been eternally grateful for our partnership with Sojourner House because, not only are they the experts in the field, but they are one of very few organizations that are able to effectively and efficiently work with Spanish speakers. Being able to refer cases to Sojourner house is a unique experience for us because not only do they do incredible work, but the traditional barriers that our community usually faces are non-existent.

For 48 years, Sojourner House, a Providence-based non-profit now serving all of Rhode Island, has supported thousands of victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. They offer services like support groups, shelter, housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. In 2024, they assisted nearly 2,000 victims from 33 RI cities and towns, even as far away as Aquidneck Island.

Five years ago, recognizing the need for affordable housing, Sojourner House began developing housing and now owns or leases over 175 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims. This is the most effective way to help families transition to safety. Sojourner House is the only organization in Rhode Island creating affordable housing for victims. They receive over 80% of their funding from federal sources, most of which require matching funds. It's time for Rhode Island to provide matching funds to ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital work.

This is a smart return on investment and is helping Rhode Island meet its low-income housing goals. Please support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House.

Sincerely,

Rebekah Gomez

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Executive Director

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