

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

May 22, 2025

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.

I've been a board member of Sojourner House for six months and they have been great partners professionally in my work experience. Over these last few months I've seen the reality of the impact that SH has had in the state and how all of it is at stake due to the federal government cutting funding. Staff could lose their jobs, clients could be dealing with longer wait times, and people could be left in vulnerable positions without help. By ensuring that SH has unrestricted funding, the agency can remain flexible to the needs of their clients and be able to weather the impending storm of funding cuts.

SH receives 80% of their funding from federal resources, most which require matching funds. This allocation could be used to allow SH to apply for grants without worrying about where to get matching funds from.

In my community of Woonsocket:

- From 2019-2023, there were 2,047 domestic violence incidents in Woonsocket that resulted in arrests. Children were present at 23% of those incidents (467 total incidents)
- Since 2015, there have been 5 domestic violence murders
- In 2024, 10% of SH clients were from Woonsocket

Sojourner House is an important resource in Woonsocket, and I urge you to support this legislation to help not only my community but all RI residents.

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.

Thank you for your consideration!

Veronicka Vega
85 W Park Pl, Woonsocket