

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. Victim services are critical to healing and resilience in our community.

We're living through a rise in misogynistic vitriol, enforcement of abusive gender norms, wide-scale normalization of harassment and violence against women and queer folks. People are losing —have lost—access and autonomy over their bodies. And our country is flooded with people, including leaders, public figures, and policy-makers who promote ownership over the bodies and sexualities of others.

The current President has been convicted for sex abuse. Since 2017, at least 147 lawmakers from 44 states have been accused or convicted of sexual harassment or misconduct. It's no shock that the Administration is slashing funds for victim services when these are the 'leaders'. Organizations that provide victim services are heavily reliant on federal funding which leaves survivors and our community at risk.

A study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine estimate that child sexual abuse along cost the U.S. at least \$9.3 billion in a single year. In addition to medical costs, criminal justice costs, lost wages, housing instability, long-term mental health care, etc. create an incredibly economic burden. **Investing in prevention and survivor support is not only ethical, it's cost effective.** Community-based responses, education, and healing services reduce longer-term strain on public systems and contribute to healthier, safer communities overall. When we prioritize care, healing, and prevention, we're investing in a future where our communities can thrive.

The federal government is failing survivors; **it is essential that Rhode Island stand behind survivors and support the essential work of Sojourner House by passing H5323 this year.**

Thank you for your time and attention.

With urgency,

Hannah Mackie (they/them)

Providence resident + worker, Sojourner House staff, survivor, and believer in community power.
27 Sycamore St, Providence