

Subject: Support for H-5478 Nora's Haven Funding

To: The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

My name is Damian Lima, and I am both a board member of Nora's Haven and a survivor of partner abuse within the LGBTQ community. I am writing in strong and heartfelt support of House Bill H-5478, introduced by Representative Robert Craven, which proposes \$500,000 in the 2025–2026 Rhode Island state budget to fund the vital services provided by Nora's Haven.

This isn't just a policy issue for me—it's deeply personal. Years ago, I watched my former roommate endure horrific abuse at the hands of her boyfriend, who is also the father of her child. She was physically assaulted in my husband's apartment. I was not present the day it occurred but I witnessed the aftermath, I saw not only her pain, but also the lack of meaningful support available to her here in Rhode Island. The systems in place failed her at every turn—she was met with judgment, long waitlists, and agencies unequipped to handle the complexity of her situation.

If I had known of Nora's Haven then, her story could have ended differently. She could have had access to emergency relocation, trauma-informed care, and sensitive support that understands how complex these cases can be—all provided without delay and with the dignity she deserved. Nora's Haven fills the urgent and persistent gaps in Rhode Island's current response to domestic violence and abuse, especially for those from marginalized backgrounds who often feel invisible in mainstream support systems.

As a survivor myself and a proud board member of this organization, I can attest to the critical importance of what we do. Nora's Haven provides immediate, individualized services that traditional providers simply cannot. We assist with emergency housing, transportation, basic necessities, and access to workforce training. We prioritize survivors with disabilities, non-English speakers, and LGBTQ individuals—ensuring no one is left behind due to systemic bias or red tape.

The funding requested in H-5478 will allow Nora's Haven to meet growing needs across our state—by supporting frontline staff, expanding emergency services, and empowering survivors with the resources to rebuild safe, independent lives.

Please, support this bill. There are countless stories like mine, and like my former roommate's, still unfolding across Rhode Island. Nora's Haven is ready to be there. We just need your partnership to do it.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to justice, equity, and the safety of all Rhode Islanders.

With deep gratitude,
Damian Lima
Board Member, Nora's Haven
Providence, RI