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Member Agencies

Blackstone Valley
Advocacy Center

Domestic Violence
Resource Center of
South County

Elizabeth Buffum
Chace Center

Women's Resource Center

Task Force

Sisters Overcoming
Abusive Relationships

Affiliate Members

Center for Southeast Asians

Crossroads Rhode Island

Family Service of Rhode Island

McAuley Ministries –
McAuley Village

Progreso Latino

YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative William O'Brien, Chair of the House Finance
Subcommittee on Public Safety
Honorable Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: March 12, 2026

Re: **Governor's FY 2027 Budget, FY 2026 Revised and Capital Budgets**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR (Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships), our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) appreciates this opportunity to support the proposed Judiciary budget in the Governor's FY 2027 state budget.

We appreciate the Governor's commitment to matching the resources appropriated to the RI Judiciary in FY'26. Specifically, sustaining funding to the RICADV Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy program in collaboration with the RI Judiciary and District and Family Courts will help maintain life-saving victim services provided by the RICADV member agencies. **In the absence of this line-item, services offered by our advocates during domestic violence-related pretrial appearances would be adversely impacted.**

The Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Program provides direct assistance to victims of domestic violence or sexual violence with navigating district court cases and assistance with applying for civil restraining orders in Family Court or District Court as well. These life-saving services help survivors when the abuser has been arrested and when the victim needs a protective order for themselves or their children, even without a criminal arrest. Advocates are available at every RI courthouse to provide support and empower survivors of intimate partner violence. The court advocate will explain the rights to the survivor, as a victim of a crime, and what to expect in the often-complex court process. The advocate can also help convey wishes to the prosecutors or other court personnel and help guide the survivor through the legal system.

The court advocate will also make any referrals for the survivor for other vital resources through their domestic violence agency, and other local programs, such as counseling for adults and children who witness violence, legal services referrals, shelter and safe housing options, support groups, economic supports, crime victim compensation information, and more. All services are free and confidential for the survivor.

In 2025, over 2,700 victims received support from a court advocate in obtaining a restraining order in District or Family Court. This statistic shows the importance of consistent funding for the domestic abuse Court Advocacy program, and the many hundreds of Rhode Island survivors who rely on it for personal safety every year.

The RICADV is Rhode Island's only recognized domestic violence coalition made up of agencies serving victims throughout the state. Our full-member agencies were among the first to provide services for victims of domestic violence in RI and have been the bedrock of our community's response to domestic violence for almost half a century, providing essential services to thousands of survivors of domestic violence and their children every year.

Thank you again for your continued investment in the Court Advocacy program. **As federal funds face continued cuts, state funding has never been more imperative to support the needs of survivors and end domestic violence in our state.**