

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

Re: Testimony in support of H7324

Dear Honorable Members of the Rhode Island State House,

I am writing to you today to express how essential housing support programs are for families like mine, and to respectfully urge continued and expanded support for these critical services.

My son and I were placed in Rhode Island due to a domestic violence situation. We began our journey in South Kingstown, Rhode Island with the DVSC, where we first received critical support during a very difficult time in our lives. From there, we were able to connect with Sojourner House in Providence, who truly took us under their wing. They provided us with safe housing and helped cover our rent for the first five years of my son's life.

During that time, I faced significant hardship, including both physical and mental struggles. My son was later diagnosed with autism, which brought additional challenges, but also reinforced how vital stability and support truly are. **Because of the help we received, we were able to begin building a life here in Rhode Island—something that would not have been possible without these programs.**

In 2024, we were able to obtain Section 8 housing with the help of my worker, Jason Barnett, who has been an incredible support system, advocate, and confidant. He also assisted us in obtaining disability benefits for both myself and my son, which has provided us with a stable income that we are able to live on today.

Stable housing is the foundation for everything else in a family's life. Without it, it becomes incredibly difficult to maintain employment, ensure children's education remains consistent, and support overall physical and mental health. For many families facing hardship, access to safe and affordable housing is not just helpful—it is life-changing.

Programs and organizations such as Sojourner House in Providence provide more than just shelter. They offer safety, structure, and access to supportive services that help families rebuild their lives. These programs create an environment where parents can focus on stability and growth, while children have a secure place to learn, grow, and feel safe.

Housing assistance directly contributes to stronger communities. When families are stable, children perform better in school, parents are better able to work and contribute to the economy, and reliance on emergency services decreases. Investing in housing is not just helping individuals—it is strengthening Rhode Island as a whole.

For my family, having access to stable housing support represents the opportunity to move forward, to build a better future, and to break cycles of instability. It allows us to focus on long-term goals rather than short-term survival.

I respectfully ask that you continue to prioritize funding and policies that support housing programs and organizations like Sojourner House. These services are not just beneficial—they are essential for the well-being and growth of families across our state.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the people of Rhode Island.

Alicia Sullivan
Woonsocket RI 02895