



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I support House Resolution 7324 which would authorize the appropriation of \$500,000 to Sojourner House to support its permanent housing development program that provides safe, secure housing to individuals and families fleeing dangerous situations.

For 50 years, Sojourner House, a Providence-based non-profit now serving all of Rhode Island, has supported more than 60,000 victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. They offer services like support groups, shelter, housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. Last year, they assisted more than 2,000 victims across the state.

Seven years ago, recognizing the need for affordable housing, Sojourner House began developing housing and now owns or leases over 175 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims. This is the most effective way to help families transition to safety.

In the City of Providence, we are taking a proactive approach to addressing the housing shortage and affordability crisis by focusing on production, preservation, and protection strategies. Since taking office, my Administration has streamlined the development process, aligned housing with health and human services, and financed long-term affordable housing projects with Sojourner House and other partners. As a result, Providence is on track to exceed the State's housing production target. These efforts are paired with tenant protections, including Right to Counsel and the recently introduced Rental and Essential Needs Transition (RENT) Fund, with investments in housing supply and stabilization to prevent displacement while addressing the underlying drivers of housing instability.

State support for Sojourner House complements this strategy and serves a critical need. This targeted, evidence-based investment in both housing stability and survivor safety will help Rhode Island meet its low-income housing goals. Sojourner House is the only organization in

Rhode Island creating affordable housing for victims. They receive over 80% of their funding from federal sources, most of which require matching funds. Rhode Island providing matching funds will ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital, life-saving work. I thank the sponsor of this important piece of legislation and ask the Committee to support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House.

Sincerely,



Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor