



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

May 7, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HJR 7324: Funding for Sojourner House

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I write today to express my support for HJR 7324, which would appropriate \$500,000 to support Sojourner House's permanent housing development program, providing safe and secure housing for individuals and families fleeing dangerous situations and seeking to rebuild their lives.

As Attorney General, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact that domestic and sexual violence have on individuals, families, and entire communities. Survivors often come into contact with my office at moments of profound crisis, and it is clear that safety and stability—especially access to secure housing—are essential to breaking the cycle of abuse. Without a safe place to go, many victims are forced to remain in or return to dangerous situations, despite the risks to themselves and their children.

Rhode Island is facing record levels of domestic and sexual violence, with more than 45% of women and 40% of men having experienced intimate partner violence.¹ Leaving an abusive relationship or escaping human trafficking is extraordinarily difficult, and lack of access to safe, affordable housing remains the greatest barrier preventing survivors from doing so. This funding directly addresses that obstacle. In my experience, cases involving domestic violence and human trafficking are among the most complex and urgent, particularly when children are involved. Expanding access to safe housing will give more Rhode Islanders the opportunity to find refuge and begin rebuilding their lives.

In 2025, Sojourner House served more than 5,000 survivors through shelter, rapid rehousing, and clinical counseling; yet the need continues to far outpace available resources. Today, Sojourner House is significantly overburdened – 95% of hotline calls requesting shelter go unmet simply because there is not enough space to meet the demand. This appropriation would begin to close that gap, allowing Sojourner House to provide safe housing and critical support services to 70 adults and more than 120 children across Rhode Island.

¹ [Adults – Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

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It would also leverage an additional \$1.5 million in matching grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), maximizing its impact. Beyond expanding capacity to serve more survivors, this investment is also projected to reduce domestic violence-related costs to the state by nearly \$6.5 million.

On average, survivors attempt to leave abusive relationships seven times before successfully doing so. Sojourner House plays a critical role in helping individuals take that first, often most difficult step. Survivors deserve to know they are supported and that their safety is a priority. For these reasons, I urge the Committee to pass HJR 7324 and invest in this vital program.

Sincerely,



Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General