



Conexion Latina Newport
170 Broadway Newport, RI 02840
401-585-8165

House/Senate Finance Committee
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in support of H7324/S2848

My name is Rebekah Gomez and I am writing on behalf of Conexión Latina Newport in strong support of Representative Casey and Murray's Joint Resolution to Support Sojourner House, H7324/S2848.

Conexion Latina is a grassroots organization serving Spanish speakers on Aquidneck Island. Last year we received a grant from the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence to serve unique communities that are underserved in this area. Most of that work has consisted of being the first line of intervention with victims of DV and then referring them to the expert organizations. We have been eternally grateful for our partnership with Sojourner House because they indeed are one of those expert organizations. They are one of very few organizations that are able to effectively and efficiently work with Spanish speakers and they provide specialized services for our community that no other DV organizations offer.

For 50 years, Sojourner House, a Providence-based non-profit now serving all of Rhode Island, has supported thousands of 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. In 2025, they assisted over 5,000 victims from nearly every RI city and town.

Five years ago, recognizing the need for affordable housing, Sojourner House began developing housing and now owns or leases over 200 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims. This is the most effective way to help families transition to safety. 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. It's time for Rhode Island to provide matching funds to ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital work.

This is a smart return on investment and is helping Rhode Island meet its low-income housing goals. Please support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House so Conexión Latina, and organizations like ours, can continue to refer victims from across the state, and know that they will get the attention and service they deserve.

Sincerely,

Rebekah Gomez
Executive Director
Conexion Latina Newport