

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

Re: Testimony in Support of H7324

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senator Murray's Joint Resolution to Support Sojourner House.

My name is Yulyana Torres and I am the Staff Attorney at Sojourner House. I am a lifelong Rhode Islander, and I am so happy to have the opportunity to help provide life changing services to victims of violence and abuse in our state. I started my career in domestic violence after graduating from the University of Rhode Island. Since then, I have witnessed first hand the impact victim services can have on improving individual lives and communities.

Sojourner House is a profound asset to our Rhode Island community especially to those from some of the most vulnerable backgrounds. In 2025, nearly two thirds (63%) of their clients were homeless at the time of intake and 93% were considered low or extremely low-income. Overall, last year, we assisted over 5,000 victims across the state in nearly every city.

Victim services save lives. People who face homelessness due to being kicked out of their homes by their abusers are able to utilize housing programs to keep a roof over their heads. People who are hurt and threatened by their abusers can seek legal protection through legal services. People looking for validation, connection, and community find strength through support groups. Without funding for programs dedicated to serving victims of abuse, victims find themselves without a place to sleep, without any legal recourse, and without support that is essential in building a life free from abuse.

Without funding designated for victim services, programs must rely on other sources of income like federal grants, which have seen damaging cuts over the years and face more uncertainty under the Trump Administration. States like Massachusetts and Connecticut provide organizations with state funding that can help organizations provide essential services in the face of federal funding cuts. Rhode Island must join suit. In our small, vibrant community, we should not have to wonder whether we can uplift victims of abuse and violence. We should know we can and pave the way to do so. It is time for Rhode Island to provide matching funds to ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital work.

Please support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony. Please contact me at ytorres@sojournerri.org if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

Yulyana Torres
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