



May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chairperson, House Finance Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence RI 02903

**Re: Support H8156 Domestic Violence Prevention Act**

Chairperson and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 8156. My name is Emily DePasquale and I serve as the Director of Victim Services at Family Service of Rhode Island. In this role, I manage GO TEAM, a police co-response program that works directly with victims of crime who experience and witness violence.

Through my work, I see firsthand the devastating impact violence has on survivors every single day. What I witness consistently is that early intervention and trauma-informed support matter. When survivors are connected to services quickly, outcomes improve. Survivors feel an increased sense of safety and wellbeing, and the path to healing and rebuilding feels more attainable.

However, these essential services are increasingly difficult to sustain. Many organizations providing direct victim services are facing growing demand while navigating significant uncertainty in funding streams. House Bill 8156 is a critical step toward addressing that gap.

By establishing a dedicated Survivor Services Fund, this legislation recognizes that victim services are an essential part of Rhode Island's public safety and public health infrastructure. The bill ensures that organizations providing direct services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, stalking, and dating violence have a more stable foundation to continue their work.

I can say confidently that these services save lives. Stable funding means faster response times, stronger advocacy, better mental health support, and greater long-term stability for Rhode Island families.

I respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill 8156 and invest in the systems that help survivors heal, recover, and remain safe.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily DePasquale  
Director of Victim Services  
Family Service of RI