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Member Agencies

Blackstone Valley
Advocacy Center

Domestic Violence
Resource Center of
South County

Elizabeth Buffum
Chace Center

Women's Resource Center

Task Force

Sisters Overcoming
Abusive Relationships

Affiliate Members

Center for Southeast Asians

Crossroads Rhode Island

Family Service of Rhode Island

McAuley Ministries –
McAuley Village

Progreso Latino

YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative Marvin L. Abney, Chair of the House Finance Committee
Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: May 14, 2026

Re: **House Bill 8156, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivor Services Fund**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) appreciates this opportunity to express our **strong support for House Bill 8156**. This act would establish the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivor Services Fund in Rhode Island to provide state funding for primary purpose domestic and sexual violence advocacy organizations in Rhode Island.

The RICADV is Rhode Island's only federally recognized domestic violence coalition made up of agencies serving victims throughout the state. Our full-member agencies were among the first to provide services for victims of domestic violence in R.I. and have been the bedrock of our community's response to domestic violence for almost half a century. Domestic violence organizations build staffing and services around the expectation that critical federal funding streams will continue on a predictable timeline. Right now, that timeline has become very uncertain. The uncertainty and delays across federal funding streams are already affecting our ability to maintain services consistently, leaving some victims unsupported. The current climate is making it increasingly difficult for domestic and sexual violence organizations to plan ahead, retain staff, and sustain long-term programming for survivors and communities. It is imperative that these lifeline programs for many survivors of domestic violence are strengthened during this time of drastic federal cuts to victim services funding.

The member agencies of the RICADV provide essential services to thousands of survivors of domestic violence and their children every year in RI. In 2025 alone, RICADV member agencies served 9,695 individual victims, providing 48,625 individual services. Each of these statistics represent an increase from 2024. Yet due to funding cuts and funding delays, these agencies have been forced to lay off staff, combine advocate positions, and scale back programs – all during a time when victims' needs have only increased and intensified.

The fund shall be established with a one-time investment of one million dollars from the general fund in its inaugural year. Thereafter, the fund shall be sustained by ten percent of proceeds from any settlement entered by the attorney general resulting from a multi-state initiative, not to exceed five million dollars per settlement. The fund shall be eligible and empowered to receive and deposit any monies from philanthropic donations.

Further state or federal losses to the resources that sustain primary purpose domestic and sexual violence organizations in our state would be catastrophic. We look forward to working with the House Finance Committee and the Rhode Island General Assembly to invest essential funds to prevent domestic and sexual violence in our state and to safeguard the lives of Rhode Islanders with some of the most life-threatening needs: Victims of abuse.

Thank you for your consideration, we urge you to pass H. 8156 this session.