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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 Robert E. Craven, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

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

Date: April 8, 2025

Re: **Support for House Bill 6122**

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 6122**. This bill would protect against discrimination based on disability in federally funded programs and activities, even if there is a change in the federal law. The passage of this bill is incredibly important to ensure every victim of domestic violence receives the vital resources necessary to escape violence without the fear of their rights being taken away.

It is critical to our public safety and public health that victims feel safe in their communities. This is especially true when considering the unique vulnerabilities that victims with disabilities face when experiencing domestic violence. These vulnerabilities include physical disabilities that decrease their ability to defend themselves or escape harm, and other disabilities that make it difficult to understand or report abuse that is occurring. As a result of this abusers will often use a victim's disability against them in order to assert power and control over their victim. Abusers will often prevent victims from accessing essential life resources and isolate them from support networks.

People with disabilities experience domestic violence at 5 times the rate of those without disabilities with rates of domestic violence being higher for those with cognitive disabilities.¹ They also experience abuse for longer periods of time along with experiencing more severe and frequent acts of abuse than non-disabled individuals. Therefore, it is critically important that victims continue to have access to public assistance programs and have their civil rights protected. Without these protections individuals with disabilities experiencing domestic violence will face even more barriers in fleeing from violence. They will continue to be at more risk of experiencing severe acts of domestic violence as well.

The societal costs associated with intimate partner violence are substantial. According to the CDC, the lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives.² Loss of financial stability and access to resources is a prominent reason that victims are unable to leave an abusive relationship. No victim of domestic violence should remain at risk because of a lack of safe and fair opportunities and options from their civil rights being taken away from them.

Thank you for your consideration and support for this critical anti-discrimination bill.

¹ Federal Domestic Violence Assistance: HHS Should Assess Accessibility-Related Technical Assistance for Local Centers. *U.S. Government Accountability Office*. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106366>

² Intimate partner violence: Consequences. *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>