



641 Bald Hill Road
Warwick, RI 02886
401-467-9940
www.ricadv.org
ricadv@ricadv.org
24-hour Helpline:
800-494-8100

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 Carol Hagan McEntee, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: April 2, 2026

Re: Concerns Regarding House Bill 7203 as Written; Request for Amendments

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 **request specific amendments in a Sub A to House Bill 7203 that would allow the RICADV to support this legislation.** We would respectfully request exemption and carve-out language for *all* domestic violence offenses that will allow the court some discretion to provide for the safety of a domestic abuse survivor when the criminal complaint involves a domestic violence related offense, including the violation of a protective order.

We request the following language to be included on page 1, line 16 of the bill: **“unless the person is charged with a domestic violence offense under chapter 29 of title 12”**. This language is specific and includes all enumerated domestic offenses in RIGL 12-29-2. This bill should include exemption language that contains all the domestic offenses in RIGL 12-29-2 in the determination of bail conditions. Currently, House Bill 7203 does not include any exemption language for domestic violence offenses. We strongly encourage this exemption language to be included to help ensure the safety of domestic violence victims.

Survivor safety is critical, and allowing the court some discretion when the offense may indicate dangerous escalation to lethality is particularly important. In our recent publication, the [2016-2020 RI Domestic Violence Homicides report](#), on page 4, we concluded: *“Just over half of the perpetrators had previous involvement in domestic violence-related judicial proceedings. Fifty-five percent (12) of the perpetrators were or had been subject to a civil domestic violence restraining order, and 45% (10) of the perpetrators had previously been convicted or pled nolo contendere in a domestic violence case.”* Although about half of the DV homicide perpetrators in the five-year report had prior DV criminal histories, about half of them had *no prior* DV history in their record. Since a potentially deadly case of intimate partner violence could take place without a documented track record in the system, our position is that *domestic violence offense exemption language* is important in this bill for the court's discretion on danger and risk assessment, and necessary for survivor safety.

Page 9 of the same DV Homicide report also highlights research indicating that the period of time immediately after a survivor takes steps to end the abusive relationship, report abuse, or leave the abusive partner is uniquely dangerous: “The time after a victim ends an abusive relationship can be one of the most dangerous periods. Perpetrators of domestic violence will often escalate their tactics of abuse as they start to lose control over the victim.” The discretion of a court to remove a violent abusive partner from the victim for a matter of even a few days could give the victim time to safely flee, relocate to safe housing, and access the needed support, advocacy, and resources to remain safe. These couple of days can sometimes be the difference between life or death for survivors.

With the inclusion of this amendment pertaining to a specific and clear domestic violence offense carve-out when considering bail conditions, the RICADV would then be able to support this important bail reform bill.