



**RE: Testimony in support of BILL H7557 & H8073– Firearm Industry Accountability & Unlawful Sale of Prohibited Firearms**

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to write in strong support of **House Bills 7557** and **8073** which seek to strengthen firearm protections and accountability in our state.

For 50 years, Sojourner House, a non-profit based in Providence but now providing services across the state, has served thousands of victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. We offer wraparound services such as support groups, emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. We believe that everyone deserves a safe, healthy home, and proudly house all genders.

In the U.S., on average, every 10 hours someone is fatally shot by an intimate partner.<sup>i</sup> Compared to countries worldwide, the U.S. remains the most dangerous country for domestic violence survivors to live as they are “21 times more likely to be killed with a gun” compared to those in other similarly resourced countries.<sup>i</sup> In Rhode Island it is estimated that that 1 in 2 women and 2 in 5 men will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives.<sup>ii</sup> Compared to any other New England state, Rhode Island ranks highest in intimate partner violence.<sup>iii</sup> **Since January of 2025, nearly all domestic violence homicides in Rhode Island involved firearms.**<sup>iii</sup> For many survivors, the presence of a gun turns ongoing abuse into a life-threatening situation. The mere presence of a firearm can increase the “risk of homicide by 500%” in domestic violence incidents.<sup>iii</sup> This is a clear, evidence-based indicator that access to a gun often turns abuse into homicide.

While there are protections in place to prevent gun ownership among people with a domestic violence order under R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-47-5(b) and federal law 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(8); 921(a)(32), this does not allow for protection from the nuanced violence that is often central in domestic violence experiences.<sup>iv</sup> House Bills 7557 and 8073 address critical gaps in our current laws. House Bill H8073 further addresses this danger directly by strengthening restrictions on the possession of prohibited firearms. At the same time, House Bill H7557 focuses on how firearms enter these situations in the first place by looking upstream at the practices of the firearm industry itself. By establishing standards for responsible marketing, distribution, and sales, and by allowing accountability when those standards are violated, this legislation helps reduce the likelihood that firearms end up in dangerous hands.

**For survivors, accountability matters. Prevention matters.**

No single policy will end domestic violence. But evidence shows that reducing access to firearms in these situations saves lives. Integrating H8073’s restrictions alongside H7557’s industry accountability provisions highlights the multifaceted legislative effort this session to address gun-related harm that balances protections for vulnerable individuals with protections for lawful owners. These bills are practical, targeted steps that align with what we know works.

**We urge you to pass H7557 and H8073 to better protect survivors and prevent avoidable tragedies in our state.**

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<sup>i</sup> Giffords (n.d.). Who can have a gun: Domestic violence and firearms. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/domestic-violence-firearms/>

<sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control (December, 2023). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 State Report. <https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/documentation/NISVS-2016-2017-State-Report-508.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Hernandez, L. (25 Feb, 2026). After Pawtucket shooting, advocates urge awareness of domestic violence warning signs. Ocean State Media. <https://www.oceanstatemedia.org/news-culture/health/after-pawtucket-shooting-advocates-urge-awareness-of-domestic-violence-warning-signs>

<sup>iv</sup> Women's Law (25 Sept, 2025). State gun laws. <https://www.womenslaw.org/laws/ri/state-gun-laws/guns-and-restraining-orders>