

Chair Carol H. McEntee  
House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island State House

April 9, 2026



**RE: Testimony in support of House Bill 8347, Limitations on Immigration Enforcement Cooperation**

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of H8347**, a bill that would prohibit engagement of state and local authorities with federal civil immigration.

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.

H8347, while not centered on survivors of domestic and sexual violence, or human trafficking has a number of important implications for survivors, especially immigrant survivors. Allowing cooperation between state and local police with federal immigration enforcement creates a chilling effect where **survivors may be hesitant, or even afraid, to report abuse, seek protective orders, or access other critical legal remedies if they fear that any interaction with law enforcement could lead to detention, deportation, or separation from their family.**<sup>i</sup> This fear is rooted in lived experiences of survivors that have experienced or witnessed immigration consequences tied to reporting crimes.<sup>ii</sup> As a result, **abuse goes unreported, leaving survivors without protection and enabling perpetrators to continue harmful behavior unchecked.**

Beyond the individual impact, this dynamic undermines community safety more broadly, as unreported abuse allows cycles of violence to persist and prevents law enforcement from addressing dangerous situations before they escalate. Addressing this intersection is therefore crucial not only for protecting immigrant survivors but for promoting public safety and trust in legal institutions.

**In closing, H8347 can play a meaningful role in reducing barriers for survivors of domestic violence to seek help, report abuse, and participate fully in the justice system. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support H8347.**

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> Dhingra, R., Kilborn, M., & Woldemikael, O. (2022). Immigration policies and access to the justice system: The effect of enforcement escalations on undocumented immigrants and their communities. *Political Behavior*, 44, 1359-1387. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09663-w>

<sup>ii</sup> Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (2025). Fear and silence: 2025 insights from advocates for immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. <https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/fear-and-silence-report>