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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 Stephen M. Casey, Chair of the House Municipal Government & Housing Committee
Honorable Members of the House Municipal Government & Housing Committee

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

Date: February 1, 2024

Re: Considerations Regarding House Bill 7175

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence appreciates this opportunity to express our **concerns regarding H 7175**. This bill would establish rules and procedures for licensing “emergency shelters,” including setting minimum standards for certain homeless shelters within the state of Rhode Island.

While we certainly support the intent of this legislation, we are concerned that the bill’s language creates uncertainty about whether the regulations resulting will apply to domestic violence crisis shelters as well as to traditional emergency homeless shelters. **Domestic violence shelters in Rhode Island are already subject to rigorous regulations, as well as auditing and monitoring requirements as part of the federal grants that fund the bulk of their services.** We are concerned that this process could lead to burdensome state obligations that could conflict with the federal requirements if applied to domestic violence shelters.

Without a clear exclusion of domestic violence shelters, they are likely to fall under the jurisdiction of this bill.

Domestic violence shelters are already highly regulated, audited and monitored. Replicating these regulations for domestic violence shelters on a state level is not likely to significantly improve conditions at domestic violence shelters, but does have the potential to take already scarce resources away from the work of serving victims. **We would respectfully ask the Committee to amend the legislation to specifically exempt domestic violence shelters receiving federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funds from the shelter licensing standards and regulations in this bill.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.