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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 11, 2026

**Re: Concerns Regarding House Bill 7044 and 7225**

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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 7044 and H 7225 as written**. H 7044 seeks to create a commission to make recommendations to establish homeless shelter standards through regulations. H 7225 would establish rules and procedures for licensing “emergency shelters,” including setting minimum standards for homeless shelters within the state of Rhode Island.

While we certainly support the intent of these pieces of legislation, we are concerned that the language in the bills 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.

While House Bill 7044 does have language to include domestic violence shelter workers and residents as members of the commission, the uncertainty about whether the resulting state regulations will apply to federally-regulated domestic violence crisis shelters could have a serious negative impact on the functions and capacity of this vital service for domestic abuse survivors.

Without a clear exclusion of federally-funded domestic violence shelters, they are likely to fall under the jurisdiction of these bills with potentially conflicting regulations and standards, particularly around the stringent victim confidentiality requirements already enforced in federal law for domestic violence shelters and services.

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 and their children in shelter and safe housing. **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 proposed regulations in these bills.**

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