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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

To: Representative Evan P. Shanley,
Chair of the House State Government and Elections Committee
Honorable Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee

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

Date: January 27, 2026

Re: **Support for House Bill 7236**

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 support for **House Bill 7236**. This bill creates a two-year pilot program to allow Equity Impact Statements (tools similar to fiscal notes) for proposed legislation and the Governor's proposed budget.

Equity Impact Statements are designed to assess the impacts of potential legislation based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age or country of ancestral origin. Currently there is no assessment tool that exists in the General Assembly that evaluates whether a piece of legislation will widen or reduce disparities for communities of color, LGBTQ+ and gender nonconforming individuals, and other historically oppressed groups that often are the most affected. This often results in unintended consequences on disproportionately impacted communities, even for bills with good intentions.

At the core of domestic abuse is power and control, which is rooted in systems of oppression on the societal level. Racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression create conditions such as poverty, reduced educational and economic opportunity, and harmful gender norms, which are factors that increase the risk for domestic violence.

According to The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, collected by the CDC, multiracial, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Black communities are most impacted by intimate partner violence.¹ CDC data also demonstrate victimization disparities by gender identity and sexual orientation; “among U.S. adults, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals bear a disproportionately high burden of violence victimization relative to their heterosexual peers.”² Disproportionate rates of intimate partner violence in communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities can be attributed to historic and ongoing structural harms and systemic discrimination that reduce health and safety for some communities more than others.

To end domestic abuse, we must end oppression in all its forms. House Bill 7236 promotes informed decision-making, democratic transparency, and awareness of persisting disparities, bringing us one step closer toward a more equitable Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We urge you to support House Bill 7236 and pass it this year.**

¹ Leemis R.W., Friar N., Khatiwada S., Chen M.S., Kresnow M., Smith S.G., Caslin, S., & Basile, K.C. (2022). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/documentation/NISVSReportonIPV_2022.pdf

² Chen, Jieru et al. (2023). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Victimization by Sexual Identity. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/98137>