



641 Bald Hill Road
Warwick, RI 02886
401-467-9940
www.ricadv.org
ricadv@ricadv.org
24-hour Helpline:
800-494-8100

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 Evan 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: April 16, 2026

Re: **Support for House Bill 8334**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) appreciates this opportunity to express our **strong support for House Bill 8334**. This bill will put into state law voter protections similar to those provided by the original federal Voting Rights Act (VRA), and in some instances will go beyond that landmark law.

While the federal VRA may be weakened, Rhode Islanders have the chance to protect our own access to voting, and we need to do so before it's too late. The RIVRA will provide remedies for voters who face threats to their ability to cast a ballot, something that the federal VRA does not include. A category of voters often faced with denial of fair access to the ballot in a safe, secure manner includes survivors of domestic abuse.

For many people, voting is a simple act. But for survivors of domestic violence, it can be dangerous, complicated, and sometimes impossible. Survivors are often forced to flee their homes with little more than what they can carry. That means leaving behind identification, proof of address, and the documents many of us take for granted. They may be moving between shelters, staying with family, or rebuilding their lives in new communities. Our current systems were not designed with that reality in mind.

Beyond logistical barriers, there are real safety concerns. Survivors work incredibly hard to keep their locations confidential. Any system that risks exposing their address—even unintentionally—can put their lives at risk. No one should have to choose between their safety and their right to vote.

The Rhode Island Voting Rights Act helps change that.

Let's be clear: survivors shape public policy. They rely on safe housing, economic support, legal protections, and community resources. If they are locked out of the voting process, they are locked out of shaping the very systems meant to protect them. We must recognize that these barriers don't exist in isolation. Survivors who are low-income, people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants, or living with disabilities face greater obstacles. This bill is a step toward addressing those inequities in a meaningful way.

At its core, this is about dignity, safety, and access. It's about making sure that surviving violence does not mean losing your voice in our democracy.

We urge you to pass the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act, **House Bill 8334**.