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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: Senator Louis DiPalma, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: March 3, 2026

Re: **Support for House Bill 7127 Article 6, Question 2**

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 **support Article 6, Question 2 in the Governor's proposed budget.** This question proposes \$120 million to increase and preserve affordable and accessible housing production and infrastructure, support community revitalization, and promote homeownership for all Rhode Islanders. **We strongly urge the Committee to recommend increasing the proposed bond item to \$150 million to support affordable housing production and preservation for low and moderate-income households so the housing needs of every Rhode Islander can be met.**

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. No victim of domestic violence should have to choose between staying in an abusive situation or becoming homeless due to a lack of safe, affordable, and fair housing opportunities. In 2024, Rhode Island's domestic violence/sexual assault Helpline and hotlines answered 12,716 calls, many related to questions about safe and affordable housing options. Many of these requests were not able to be met due to the lack of available safe and affordable housing choices for survivors of domestic violence.

It is critical to our public safety and public health that victims feel safe in their communities. Fair and affordable housing is the foundation of safety. One of the most dangerous times for a victim of domestic violence is when they begin to escape the abuse and fair housing options support victims in their journey to safety. Perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence will often prevent survivors from gaining resources that would allow them to leave. This often leads to survivors staying with the abuser because they do not have the resources and options to leave. No victim escaping an abusive situation should fear that safe and equal housing will be denied to them because of the lack of available housing options. Increasing the proposed bond item to \$150 million would develop more safe options for victims fleeing violence by expanding the opportunities and options for safe and fair housing.

The societal costs associated with intimate partner violence are substantial. According to the CDC, the lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion. This economic cost estimate includes 41% of women and 26% of men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives.¹ Loss of financial stability and housing is a prominent reason that victims are unable to leave an abusive relationship. No victim of domestic violence should remain at risk because of a lack of safe and fair housing opportunities and options.

These measures are essential steps towards addressing the housing crisis and providing every Rhode Island resident with a place they can call home. This bond represents a commitment to

¹ Intimate partner violence: Consequences. *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/index.html>

the well-being and prosperity of all Rhode Islanders, laying the groundwork for a more equitable and sustainable future. With strategic investments and concerted efforts, we can forge a path towards a Rhode Island where housing insecurity is a thing of the past, and every resident has a place to call home.

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 7127 Article 6, Question 2. **We urge the Committee to support this budget article and question (Article 6, Question 2) and consider increasing the proposed amount to \$150 million to produce and preserve more affordable, safe homes for low and moderate- income Rhode Islanders.**