

Senate Finance Committee
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Ri 02903

Testimony in support of S2848

Dear Chairman DiPalma and members of the committee,

I write in strong support of Representative Murray's Joint Resolution to Support Sojourner House, S2848.

Victim services are critical to healing and resilience in our community, yet the infrastructure supporting survivors is under unprecedented assault. We are currently navigating a political climate characterized by a rise in misogynistic vitriol, the enforcement of abusive gender norms, and the normalization of violence against women and LGBTQ+ individuals. When national leaders and policy-makers normalize ownership over the bodies of others, it is no surprise that federal administrations are simultaneously slashing the very funds meant to protect survivors.

Organizations that provide victim services are heavily reliant on federal funding which leaves survivors and our community at risk. We are currently facing drastic cuts—including proposed reductions to HUD of up to 80%—alongside mounting "red tape" and reporting requirements that drain staff time and resources. Furthermore, federal restrictions, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric have created a climate of fear. This has forced us to navigate a landscape where we must provide life-saving services to survivors under a shadow of surveillance and enforcement threats.

An allocation of \$500,000 from the Rhode Island state budget would provide Sojourner House with the flexible, unrestricted support necessary to bypass the ideological and bureaucratic constraints of increasingly unreliable federal funds. This investment empowers us to respond to survivors' immediate, real-world needs and ensures that all individuals—regardless of their identity, immigration status, or circumstances—receive the affirming care they deserve, even in the face of a hostile national landscape.

The federal government is failing survivors, Rhode Island must step up. This \$500,000 investment is more than a budget line item; it is a commitment to local autonomy, rights, and the safety of our most marginalized neighbors. **It is essential that Rhode Island stand behind survivors and support the life-saving work of Sojourner House by passing S2848 this year.**

Thank you for your time and attention.

With urgency,

Hannah Mackie (they/them)

Providence resident + worker, Sojourner House staff, survivor, and believer in community power.

27 Sycamore St, Providence