

May 5, 2026

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

Re: Testimony in support of S2848

Dear Chairman DiPalma and members of the committee,

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

As Vice President of Grants and Strategic Initiatives for Sojourner House, I have had the privilege of managing the organization's federal funding portfolio for the past three years. In that role, I have witnessed firsthand the extraordinary work this organization does every single day — helping victims find safety, secure stable housing, and take the first steps toward rebuilding their lives. That daily reality has made me a strong and committed advocate for the resources Sojourner House needs to continue this mission.

Our organization continues to face mounting challenges from a shifting federal funding landscape that not only reduces critical program resources but also imposes tighter eligibility criteria, effectively pushing some of our most vulnerable clients out of access.

For 50 years, Sojourner House has been helping victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking from throughout Rhode Island. They operate the state's largest residential services program for victims, including 3 emergency shelters and over 200 leased or agency-owned apartment units. Alongside housing, Sojourner House provides supportive services, including a 24/7 helpline, free counseling and support groups, legal advocacy, financial education, and specialized programs for children—such as a free summer camp.

Seven years ago, recognizing the need for affordable housing, Sojourner House began developing housing and now owns 42 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims. This is the most effective way to help families transition to safety.

Sojourner House receives over 80% of their funding from federal sources, most of which require matching funds. It's time for Rhode Island to provide matching funds to ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital work.

This is a smart return on investment and is helping Rhode Island meet its low-income housing goals. Please support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House. Thank you,

Kirsten Davis

Barrington, Rhode Island