



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 5, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in support of S2848

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of Senator Murray's Senate Resolution 2848 which would authorize the appropriation of \$500,000 to Sojourner House to support its permanent housing development program that provides safe, secure housing to individuals and families fleeing from dangerous situations.

For 50 years, Sojourner House, a Providence-based non-profit now serving all of Rhode Island, has supported over 60,000 victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. They offer services like support groups, shelter, housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. Last year, they assisted over 2,000 victims across the state.

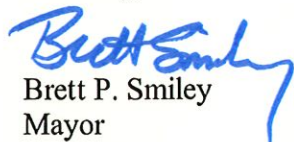
Seven years ago, recognizing the need for affordable housing, Sojourner House began developing housing and now owns or leases over 175 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims. This is the most effective way to help families transition to safety.

At the same time, in the City of Providence, we are taking a proactive approach to addressing the housing shortage and affordability crisis by focusing on production, preservation, and protection. Since taking office, my Administration has streamlined the development process, aligned housing with health and human services, and financed long-term affordable housing projects with Sojourner House and other partners. As a result, Providence is on track to exceed the state's housing production target. These efforts are paired with tenant protections, including Right to Counsel and the recently announced Rental and Essential Needs Transition (RENT) Fund, with investments in housing supply and stabilization to prevent displacement while addressing the underlying drivers of housing instability.

State support for Sojourner House complements this strategy and serves a critical need. This targeted, evidence-based investment in both housing stability and survivor safety, will help Rhode Island meet its low-income housing goals. Sojourner House is the only organization in Rhode Island creating affordable housing for victims. They receive over 80% of their funding from federal sources, most of which require matching funds. Rhode Island providing matching

funds will ensure Sojourner House can continue its vital, life-saving work. I thank the sponsor of this important piece of legislation and ask the Committee to support this \$500,000 allocation for Sojourner House.

Sincerely,


Brett P. Smiley
Mayor