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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 Matthew L. LaMountain, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

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

Date: April 7, 2026

Re: **Support for Senate Bill 3143, the RI Voting Rights Act**

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 Senate Bill 3143**. 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 voter 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.

It creates a more flexible and inclusive system—one that recognizes that not everyone has a fixed address, easy access to documentation, or the freedom to vote without fear. It strengthens protections, expands access to the ballot in a safe manner, and ensures that our democracy includes the voices of those often pushed to the margins.

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, Senate Bill 3143.