



February 25, 2024

Chairman Marvin Abney  
House Finance Committee  
RI State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Ri 02903

Re: Testimony in support of the Governor's FY2026 Budget H50767, Article 5, Sections 4, 7, 10

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the committee,

We write in support of the Governor's FY2026 proposed budget articles focused on a revenue proposals to fund needed housing and homelessness initiatives including housing production and housing rental subsidies. We thank the Governor for recommending these new revenue sources to support this important work, and we urge the general assembly to include them in the final FY26 budget.

For 49 years, Sojourner House, a Providence-based non-profit serving victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking across the state, has provided support such as emergency shelter, housing, sexual health advocacy, and emotional support. We believe everyone deserves a safe home.

Access to secure housing is often a barrier for victims fleeing abuse. By offering stable, permanent housing options, we aim to break the cycle of abuse and help families rebuild. In 2020, recognizing the shortage of affordable housing, we began developing our own housing. Since then, we've acquired 175 units statewide, providing permanent supportive housing to victims.

While funded by state support, federal grants, and donations, we face difficulty finding housing to purchase. Our clients, mostly low-income, struggle even more to secure affordable housing. Rhode Island must increase its supply of low-income housing—it's a matter of life and death for many.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony, and for your continued efforts to support access to affordable housing in Rhode Island. Please contact me at [Vvolz@Sojournerri.org](mailto:Vvolz@Sojournerri.org) if you have any questions about our work or this testimony.

Sincerely,

  
Vanessa Volz  
President & CEO

---

386 Smith Street | Providence, RI 02908

Drop-in Center: 401.861.6191 | Fax: 401.861.6157 | Housing Office: 401.808.6889

Helplines: 401.765.3232 | 401.658.4334 | Web: [www.sojournerri.org](http://www.sojournerri.org)