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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: Representative William O'Brien,
Chair of the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety
Honorable Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety

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

Date: April 8, 2025

Re: **House Bill 5076 – Department of Public Safety**

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 weigh in on the Department of Public Safety (DPS) section of the Governor's proposed budget.

We appreciate the Governor's commitment to matching the resources appropriated to DPS in FY25. However, as federal Victims of Crime Act funds wane, the resources that DPS can pass through to victim-serving organizations are scarce and leave many victims unsupported. In the face of current and predicted federal cuts, **we urge the committee to consider supporting Chair Craven's bill, H. 5390**, which would add \$30 million to the DPS budget to support services for victims of crime.

The RICADV is Rhode Island's only recognized domestic violence coalition made up of agencies serving victims throughout the state. Our full-member agencies were among the first to provide services for victims of domestic violence in R.I. and have been the bedrock of our community's response to domestic violence for almost half a century. It is imperative that these lifeline programs for many survivors of domestic violence are strengthened during this time of drastic federal cuts to victim services funding.

The member agencies of the RICADV provide essential services to thousands of survivors of domestic violence and their children every year in RI. In 2024 alone, RICADV member agencies served **9,661 individual victims**, provided **46,318 individual services**, and answered **12,716 calls** to the Victims of Crime Helpline and Agency Hotlines. Each of these statistics represent an increase from 2023. Yet due to funding cuts, these agencies have been forced to lay off staff, combine advocate positions, and scale back programs – all during a time when victims' needs have only increased and intensified.

We are grateful for the committee's attention. Further state or federal losses to the resources that sustain victim-serving organizations in our state would be catastrophic. We look forward to working with you and the Rhode Island General Assembly to prevent domestic violence in our state and invest available funds to safeguard the lives of Rhode Islanders with the most life-threatening needs: victims and survivors of crime.