



641 Bald Hill Road
Warwick, RI 02886
401-467-9940
www.ricadv.org
ricadv@ricadv.org
24-hour Helpline:
800-494-8100

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 Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: April 4, 2024

Re: Support for House Bill 7629

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 support for House Bill 7629**. This bill would include the offense of second-degree sexual assault among the offenses to which there would be no statute of limitations and provides for a ten-year statute of limitations for third-degree sexual assault.

The links between domestic and sexual violence are well documented. The majority of female victims of rape report that their perpetrator was their intimate partner.¹ Sexual violence, alongside other forms of abusive behavior like physical and emotional abuse, is often used as a means of power and control.

During calendar year 2023, Rhode Island's statewide network of domestic violence shelters and advocacy programs served over 9,300 survivors of abuse and over 12,000 helpline calls were answered.

Disclosing experiences of domestic and sexual violence to law enforcement is a choice not all survivors make. When survivors do choose to report, it can often take months or years to feel ready to make that decision. This bill recognizes the realities that survivors face when deciding whether to report to law enforcement and offers more time to heal and recover without the pressure to report before they're ready.

As an organization invested in eliminating domestic violence and building communities that are responsive to the needs of victims, this bill supports our mission by increasing options for survivors in our state to report their experiences and seek justice on their own timeline.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and your support to prevent domestic and sexual violence and enhance safety for survivors in Rhode Island.

¹Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.