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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

To: Representative Katheen Fogarty, Chair of the House Rules Committee
Honorable Members of the House Rules Committee

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

Date: January 16, 2025

Re: **Support for House Resolution 5010**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence appreciates this opportunity to express our **support for House Resolution 5010**. This resolution would authorize the Speaker and the Rhode Island Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander (RIBLIA) Caucus to request equity impact statements on up to five (5) bills that are proposed in the Rhode Island General Assembly. The goal of these equity impact statements is to determine the positive or negatives impacts potential legislation may have based on someone's race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age or country of ancestral origin. Currently there is no assessment tool that exists in the general assembly that evaluates whether a piece of legislation will have a positive or negative impact on communities of color, LGBTQAI+ and gender nonconforming individuals, and other historically oppressed groups that often are the most affected. This often results in bills with good intentions that seek to help those who are disproportionately discriminated against being harmed by these bills instead.

At the core of domestic violence is power and control, where one person uses abusive tactics to maintain power and control over their partner. This dynamic is rooted in systems of oppression on the societal level: racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and transphobia, to name some of them. Systems of oppression create conditions such as poverty, the lack of educational and economic opportunity, and harmful gender norms, which are factors that increase the risk for domestic violence. This is why we believe that in order to end domestic abuse, we must end oppression in all its forms. House Resolution 5010 brings us one step closer toward a more equitable Rhode Island.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Black women and men experience intimate partner violence at disproportionately high rates. In 2017, for female victim/male offender homicides, Black females had the highest rate at 2.55 per 100,000¹. The high rates of intimate partner violence and female victim homicides in this community can easily be attributed to the years of systemic racism, racist policies, and racist social structures that members of this community are still fighting against. By limiting their access to financial and educational opportunities, and creating a fear of government systems has created numerous barriers for victims seeking safety. Including an equity impact statement in legislation would help to prevent further disparities in communities that have been discriminated against and would help to create more equity in Rhode Island communities instead.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We urge you to support House Resolution 5010 as written, and pass it this year.**

¹ Domestic Violence and the Black Community. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2020). Retrieved from https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/dv_in_the_black_community.pdf