

Hello, my name is [____], and I live in [____]. I'm [calling/emailing] to urge Rhode Island leaders to support the R.I. Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) in their request to utilize the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support victims of domestic abuse and prevent violence in our communities.

The RICADV is advocating to use ARPA funding for:

- Replenishing life-saving victim services affected by Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) cuts,
- Strengthening advocacy and support services, such as counseling, services to children who witness domestic violence, and direct cash assistance to victims,
- Addressing severe gaps in specialized services for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) individuals, immigrants, the elderly, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities,
- Developing and improving emergency shelter and providing short-term safe and affordable housing, and
- Increasing the Deborah DeBare Domestic Violence Prevention Fund and investing in primary prevention strategies to create healthy communities for all Rhode Islanders and prevent abuse before it happens in the first place.

With the risks of domestic violence drastically increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic, survivors have been experiencing multiple crises. Since 2019, the RICADV and its member agencies have faced a 63% cut to VOCA funding, putting services survivors depend on in jeopardy.

[If you have a personal story about how domestic violence has impacted you, children you know, your loved ones, friends or neighbors, share it here. Our elected leaders need to hear about how this issue impacts our community.]

We need to do all we can as a state to respond to the immediate needs of survivors as we work towards ending domestic violence. I'm urging Gov. McKee, Senate President Ruggerio, Speaker of the House Shekarchi, Chairman Pearson and Chairman Abney of the Finance Committee, and the ARPA Task Force Co-Chairpersons, Rep. Marszałkowski and Rep. Tobon, to please consider funding these life-saving programs through ARPA.

Thank you very much for your consideration.