I am Riley O'Hagan, the Direct Services Coordinator at CircleVT. We are Washington County's domestic and sexual violence support agency. I am here today in strong support of a $450,000 appropriation to fill the deficit in Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund and level fund services.

There is a great need for domestic and sexual violence services in our community, particularly during this time.

Statewide, domestic and sexual violence programs responded to over 23,000 hotline calls in 2025. 5,000 of which were from Washington County. Circle has only 5 staff to respond to this overwhelming amount of need.

Without fully funding DV / SV services, we are left with little to no resources to help survivors. No budget to buy security cameras, pay for car damages done by abusers, provide gas cards to get to appointments, and the various other needs of our service users.

No one else does this work. We have a true understanding of domestic and sexual violence, and can successfully assist traumatized survivors to negotiate the many barriers to fleeing what has become the reality of their life.

Not only does fully funding DV / SV programs allow us to provide the full range of services to survivors, it also allows service workers to have the ability to continue this work. As an advocate with a college education, I make less than I did at my barista job 7 years ago, forcing me to step away from this work in the coming months. The limited funding we receive lends itself to a very high amount of staff turnover, the inability to find new hires, and an incredible gap between the services we are able to provide and the needs of the community around us.

Fully funding essential DV / SV prevention and response services is crucial to keeping Vermonters safe. At a minimum, please appropriate $450,000 to support Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund.

Thank you for your time and willingness to consider my testimony as you make decisions about the state budget.

Riley O'Hagan
Direct Services Coordinator - CircleVT