



Jane Doe Inc. Press Conference to Restore \$7M in DPH Cuts to  
Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

**Statement by Stephanie Brown, Casa Myrna CEO**

October 23, 2025

I understand that the Legislature and Administration have very difficult funding decisions to make, particularly at this point in our collective history. And I understand that funding for sexual and domestic violence organizations is critical to keeping survivors, children, and our communities safe. We are worth the investment – **survivors** are worth the investment.

As a domestic violence organization in Boston, we at Casa Myrna believe every relationship should be safe and healthy. We work predominantly in the neighborhoods of Dorchester and Roxbury supporting over 1,800 BIPOC survivors each year through our shelter, housing, counseling, legal advocacy, economic stability, and children's programs. We engage young people to teach other young people about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

We provide financial assistance to 450 families each year – helping them with rent and utility arrearages so they can remain in their housing, with hotel stays when they need to flee and shelter is unavailable, with car repairs so they can get to work, with food when groceries are unaffordable. With these funding cuts, we will not have the financial resources to provide survivors. Many of these families will become homeless without our support and we will have to refer them to a more costly, overburdened, and inaccessible Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter system.

In the past year, Casa Myrna Advocates answered over 26,000 calls to SafeLink, the statewide domestic violence hotline. Of those calls, 23,000 were from survivors seeking shelter. For 91% of those 23,000 survivors who called for shelter – a domestic violence shelter bed was not available anywhere in the state. In other words, SafeLink advocates had to tell 21,000 callers last year that there were no open DV shelter beds. When there are no beds, we refer survivors to their local domestic violence organization for support with staying safe and finding places to stay.

**With these cuts to our DPH funding, collectively we will have fewer already scant shelter beds across the state – and fewer community advocates to help survivors plan for and obtain safety from abuse.**

Casa Myrna is facing a \$108k cut between now and June 30, 2026 from our shelter, community advocacy, and SafeLink contracts. I would like to share with you stories of survivors we have helped in the past. **In the future, because of the cuts, we may not be able to help others like them.**

Sonia was a mother of six so controlled and abused by her husband that for over a year, she could only leave the house to shop for groceries, go to church, and take the children to and from school. Somehow, she managed to plan her exit with one of our advocates. After months of planning, she chose the day she would leave and we helped her pick up her children from school and bring them to our office in

Boston. We were able to put them in a hotel for a month while we helped her secure housing, clothing for her children, and food so she and her children could heal and keep her family safe.

Macey was kicked out of her home by her abusive mother when she was 17 and pregnant. After she gave birth to her son, Sam, her mother tried to strangle her with a rope while she was holding Sam. Macey's school referred her to Casa Myrna and she entered our shelter for young parents. She engaged with our housing and economic stability supports, finished high school, and is on her way to becoming a geriatric nurse while being a loving role model of strength and resiliency for her son.

**I call on the Legislature to hear our stories and really listen to the devastating impacts of these cuts on survivors. I call on the Legislature to restore the funding and keep survivors, families, and the Commonwealth safe.**

Thank you.