

Hello,

My name's Jessica Spalding, I'm a resident of Smithfield Rhode Island. I wanted to share my support for House Bill #5100. I think the continued building of Echo Village will greatly benefit the people of our state. With rising prices on rent, I've seen how much people have been effected over the course of the last few years. With freezing temperatures, and a lack of space for our homeless neighbors, I've been incredibly worried about this. Having this temporary housing in Providence would be incredible in helping people get into permanent housing.

This is very close to my heart, I was homeless for a brief time at the age of 16 years old. My mother worked well over 60 hours across three jobs (two on top of her high priority tech job), we were unable to find suitable housing for a three-person family over the course of three months. This was after leaving a very abusive domestic situation. While my family thankfully took us in, this experience greatly impacted my mental health, contributed to the already insurmountable amount of stress on my mother, and put a lot of strain between us in an already delicate situation. I still remember not having a place to call my own, and how worthless I felt despite surviving one of the worst periods of my life. This was in 2016. The homeless population in Rhode Island has increased by 600% since 2019.

Please, pass this bill for the care and consideration of all the adults, children, teens, and elderly in this position. Speaking from experience, you never know if this can happen to you.

Jessica Spalding