

Testimony in support of HB 5102

Dear Chairman Casey, and members of House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing:

I am writing to express my general support for HB 5100, which clarifies the Homeless Bill of Rights and strengthens the provision of safe shelter with stronger definitions and expectations.

Section 1. creates a “right to shelter” for homeless people, while section 8 requires access to safe and nutritious food for sheltered people.

These requirements should have a budget allocation included from the state and (if shared funding is the fair way to support these requirements) local cities and towns. The required provision of shelter and food cannot be implemented without a serious cost analysis and a dedicated source of sufficient dollars. The current shortage of available shelters will not be fixed by simply establishing a “right to shelter”.

Nor can a sustainable system of shelters be maintained by adding volunteers. Funds to cover the actual costs of running a shelter and providing food must be factored into the formula for improving access and assuring adequate supply.

I recommend that these factors be considered and accounted for with a dedicated and protected funding source that can realistically support this higher standard of care on a continuous basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Dumond,

Providence, Rhode Island resident