

Testimony in support of HB 5665

Dear Representative Casey, Chair and members of House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

We are writing in support of HB 5665. As residents of Providence, we have witnessed the impact of police pushing unhoused people off of their temporary outdoors locations. This is a cruel practice that, though legal, does nothing to address the urgent problem of being unhoused and unsheltered with no place to be allowed to reside.

The current system of providing indoor apartments and/or congregate sheltering is well intended and a substantial investment for cities and towns. However, the trend has been for greater numbers of people to become unhoused due to multiple factors, and a large portion of the problem is that the economics of our state and nation no longer works for too many people.

The situation has become dire, and in need of greater investment, planning, and reliable response on the part of state and local governments as well as the people residing in communities who have the resources to do more than drive by our fellow citizens walking the streets.

We do understand the challenges of asking for more to be done in this dark period of historic budget and personnel cuts at the federal level (and inevitably resulting in \$ cuts at the state and local levels which depend on federal funds for substantial portions of their operations). The Rhode Island response needs to be to do more within our state to assure the safety of those most vulnerable.

Our opinion is that HB 5665 is a movement towards what should be a minimum set of supports to allow people with “no place like home” to exist with some level of dignity. But our state and local communities can and should go further to provide safe places for all people to dwell.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Dumond

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Residents, Providence, RI