

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6893

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS TO ASSIST HOMELESS

Title: PERSONS.

Vote Date: 2/20/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/13/2025

File No.: 57

Disclaimer: *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill will provide a one-time appropriation of \$35.5 million to the Department of Housing for programs to assist the homeless. In 2014, Connecticut developed the Coordinated Access Network (CAN) to provide regionalized services for those experiencing imminent or prolonged homelessness. This system is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and nationally considered to be the best practice for assisting the unhoused.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jaime Parker, Eastern CAN Project Manager, TVCCA:](#) Jaime Parker supported this bill to addresses critical funding gaps for the Homeless Response System so it can continue providing life-saving services and strategize a path towards solving Connecticut homelessness. Parker asserted the system remains underfunded; 2024 saw a 13% increase in homelessness and a 79% increase in calls to 2-1-1 for housing and shelter, while currently over 5,000 people are experiencing homelessness and over 900 are unsheltered. Reflecting on the last year, Parker wrote, "In 2024, there were 20,706 scheduled Coordinated Access Network (CAN) appointments, 4,468 people diverted from shelter, and 7,567 people served by emergency shelter, transitional housing, and street outreach." Parker asked to amended the bill to annualize funding or adjust and index it to inflation according to the following outline: \$5.3 Million in annualized new dollars for an Eviction Prevention Partnership, \$2.5

Million in annualized Flexible Funding, An adjustment of \$9 Million in funding for Homeless Response Services, indexed to inflation, \$5 Million in annualized funding for Cold Weather Emergency Services, \$5.5 Million in annualized funding for CAN Hub & Diversion Services to support Coordinated Access Network (CAN) Hubs, and \$6.2 Million in annualized funding for Case Management for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to stabilize individuals in Permanent Supportive Housing through Connecticut's Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Parker's testimony concluded by acknowledging the commitment of service providers and urged the committee to support both those experiencing homelessness and those providing the assistance.

The following testimonies expressed similar support:

[Allen Alderfer, Rapid Rehousing Case Manager, New Reach Inc.](#)

[Tobian Banton, Career Development Coordinator, Journey Home](#)

[Liza Carey, Open Doors](#)

[Heather Foster, Program Director, Center For Human Development](#)

[Danielle Hubley, Advocacy, Education Manager, The Partnership, PSC](#)

[Melora Johnson, Open Doors](#)

[Agustin Lopez, Mental Health Connecticut](#)

[Rebecca Martin, Board Co-Chair, Homes with Hope](#)

[Liam Nangle](#)

[Jim Pettinellil, Liberty Community Services](#)

[Kersten Rivas, President, Board of Directors, Open Doors](#)

[Chris Senecal Sr, Public Policy Officer, Hartford Foundation](#)

[Anneliese Smith, Housing Location Specialist, Windham No Freeze Project](#)

[Stacey Violante Cote, Deputy Director, Center for Children's Advocacy](#)

[Sarah Webster, Director of Human Resources](#)

[Nancy Meany](#)

[Anthony Benedosso, Director, Beth El Center](#)

[Tabitha Brown, PSH Case Manger, Beth-El Center](#)

[Kara Capone, CEO, Community Housing Advocates](#)

[Wendy Cusick, Nurse HIV, Sexual Health, Fair Haven Community Health Care](#)

[Lisa Cesario, Communications Specialist, Columbus House](#)

[Therese Eke, All In for Milford](#)

[Kenia Feliz, Housing Engagement Coordinator, Journey Home](#)

[Tirzah Kemp, Director, City of New Haven](#)

[Isabel McEachern](#)

[Rachel Merva, Director, Beth El Center](#)

[Christopher Freimuth, Director, CF Gardens](#)

[Laboni Hoque, MD](#)

[Kim Jakowski, Director of Housing, WRCC](#)

[Joshua Kelly, CEOTVCCA Inc.](#)

[Michelle Lipar, Coordinator, A Hand Up, Journey Home](#)

[Nadine Malone, CAN Manager, Journey Home](#)

[Elaine Matt, Senior Admin Housing Specialist, BHcare Inc](#)

[Cathleen Meaden, Chief Operating Officer, Columbus House Inc.](#)

[Nancy Meany](#)

[Jocelyn Murray, Marketing, Beth-El Center, Milford](#)

[Aleksander Papaluca, Housing First Case Manager, Beth-El Center](#)

[Lourdes Rodriguez, Case Manager, Project Hope](#)

[Sara Salomons Wilson, Deputy Director, Journey Home](#)
[Roseann Scala, Case Manager, Columbus House](#)
[Hannah Smith, LMSW, Director of Shelter Services, Beth-El Center, Inc.](#)
[Vernita Tertullien, Member of the Board, Open Doors](#)
[Andrea Webster, MPH, Social Services Coordinator, EHYFS](#)
[Charmain Yun, Executive Director, Christian Community Action](#)
[Therese Eke](#)

[Eliza Halsey, Community Services Administrator, City of New Haven](#) – Eliza Halsey supported this bill and stated their homeless response system remains critically underfunded despite a rise in service requests. They stated, "In Greater New Haven, the number of verified unsheltered individuals has doubled to more than 630 individuals over the past year", causing the warming centers in New Haven and the region to be consistently full despite their recent addition of 307 shelter beds. Halsey stated that Greater New Haven needs, "at least 500 units of permanent supportive housing over the next several years to meet current needs." Halsey asked that the bill be amended to annualize funding or adjust and index it to inflation according to the following outline: \$5.3 Million in annualized new dollars for an Eviction Prevention Partnership, \$2.5 Million in annualized Flexible Funding, An adjustment of \$9 Million in funding for Homeless Response Services, indexed to inflation, \$5 Million in annualized funding for Cold Weather Emergency Services, \$5.5 Million in annualized funding for CAN Hub & Diversion Services to support Coordinated Access Network (CAN) Hubs, and \$6.2 Million in annualized funding for Case Management for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to stabilize individuals in Permanent Supportive Housing through Connecticut's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

[Jessica Kubicki, Chief Initiative Officer, The Housing Collective](#) – Jessica Kubicki supported this bill and explained the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) lack funding to identify and staff emergency shelters during the cold weather months. Kubicki cites, "a 23% decrease in cold weather beds from 2023 to 2024, [and] a 19% increase in homelessness. As a result, people including families with children are sleeping in cars, and even outside." Kubicki stated that their funding is not annualized despite advocating for that funding every year.

[Caitlin Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Friendship Service Center Inc.](#) – Caitlin Rose supported this bill and applauded the inclusion of \$4.5M annually in the Governor's Budget for Cold Weather Services but wanted to reiterate: "the CT CAN End Homelessness' ask for \$33.5M annually, of which \$5M is allocated for statewide Cold Weather services each year." Rose explained that despite adding hundreds of beds for those falling into homelessness, statewide, people are turned away as demand exceeds capacity. They added that having unsheltered people suffering in such a wealthy state is unconscionable and inhumane. Rose concluded by calling for a collaborative approach to reevaluating Connecticut's homelessness response.

[Eli Sabin, Legislative Coordinator, CT Voices for Children](#) – Eli Sabin supported this bill and shared some statistics regarding homelessness in Connecticut, including a third consecutive annual increase, and in 2024 over 3,000 individuals, including more than 600 children, experienced homelessness. Sabin stated the, "increased homelessness in Connecticut predominantly stems from the affordability crisis that spans state borders and has been a growing issue over the last decade." Sabin added that focusing on housing and

homelessness will promote stronger, healthier communities, stabilize families, and create a better quality of life for everyone in the state.

[Justin Elicker, Mayor, City of New Haven](#) – Mayor Justin Elicker supported this bill and stated that Connecticut has 110,000 fewer housing units than needed, resulting in a rise of housing instability and homelessness. Elicker emphasized the importance of increasing the funding for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to support those who need transitional-like housing.

[William Rybczyk, President, New Opportunities Inc.](#): William Rybczyk supported this bill and the proposed funding. Rybczyk stressed another concern, for the state Department of Housing "provide a more timely execution of contract documents for providers in the homeless response system as well as more timely payments."

The following testimonies expressed general support of the bill:

[Tom Behrendt, Member, Community Advisory Board, Elm City COMPASS](#)

[Martin Buccolo, Board Member, Open Doors](#)

[Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT](#)

[Dale Fredston, Director, Homes with Hope](#)

[Vanessa Anonymous](#)

[Jenna Gage](#)

[Robert Beech, MD, Yale University](#)

[Maryann Burns, Board member, Journey Home](#)

[Amy Casavina Hall, Senior Vice President, United Way of Connecticut](#)

[Kellyann Day, CEO, New Reach Inc.](#)

[Billy Bromage](#)

[Thomas Burr, Public Policy Manager, NAMI Connecticut Inc.](#)

[Matthew Morgan, Executive Director, Journey Home](#)

[Monika Nugent, Public Policy Associate, The Alliance](#)

[Lauren Pittman, Compass Advisory Board](#)

[Dan Santorso, Executive Assistant, FISH NWCT Shelter and Pantry](#)

[Kelly Fitzgerald, VP of Economic Mobility, United Way of Greater New Haven](#)

[Sarah Fox, CEO, CT Coalition To End Homelessness](#)

[Thretha Green, Clinician/advisory board member, Elm City Compass](#)

[Mary Lee Kiernan, President and CEO, YWCA Greenwich](#)

[Michelle Noehren](#)

[Jim Perras, CEO, HBRA of CT](#)

[Lauren Pittman, Compass Advisory Board](#)

[Sarah Riley, Psychiatrist](#)

[Joe Simons](#)

[Lauren Pittman, Compass Community Advisory Board Member](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

The following testimonies expressed general opposition to the bill:

[Linda Dalessio](#)

[Devin Miller](#)

Reported by: Arianna Tsikitas, Clerk
Jasmine Jones, Assistant Clerk

Date: 3/20/2025