

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6894

Title: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS.

Vote Date: 2/20/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/13/2025

File No.: 58

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 establishes an interagency council on homelessness to work with the Commissioner of Housing to advise on improvements to the homelessness prevention and response efforts in Connecticut. The working group will be charged with: strengthening existing homelessness programs, improving the homelessness response system, and utilizing funding for housing assistance.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Mairead Painter, State of Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman](#): Mairead Painter is in support of this bill. The creation of this interagency council would align with the goal of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to ensure the successful transition of individuals from long-term care facilities, "By coordinating efforts across agencies, the council can promote policies that prevent evictions, expand access to affordable housing, and improve support services for at-risk populations".

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Sarah Fox, CEO, CT Coalition to End Homelessness](#) – Sarah Fox is in support of this bill and asked that it be amended, "to ensure that the bill aligns with national best practices, particularly when it comes to inclusive decision-making processes." The bill's current language does not clearly specify the inclusion of partners beyond state agencies, and the proposed amendments would, "ensure the broadest possible participation from impacted groups." Ms. Fox stated that this bill must include those with lived experience of

homelessness, those currently experiencing housing insecurity, and a wide range of partners. Ms. Fox also shared alternative models for organizing a state Interagency Council.

[Allen Alderfer, Rapid Rehousing Case Worker, New Reach Inc.](#) - Allen Alderfer is in support of this bill and asked that it be amended to "follow national best practices, ensuring participation in the decision-making process from people who are currently or formerly unhoused, service providers, partners, and advocates, alongside state agency leadership."

The following testimonies expressed similar support:

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

[Therese Eke](#)

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

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

[Kim Jakowski, Director of Housing, Windham Regional Community Council](#)

[Joshua Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, TVCCA](#)

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

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

[Isabel McEachern](#)

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

[Jaime Parker, Eastern CAN Project Manager, TVCCA](#)

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

[Sara Salomons Wilson, Deputy Director, Journey Home](#)

[Roseann Scala, Case Manager, Columbus House](#)

[Vernita Tertullien, Member of the Board, Open Doors](#)

[Andrea Webster, Social Services Coordinator, EHYFS](#)

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

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

[Liza Carey, Open Doors Board Member](#)

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

[Kenia Feliz, Housing Engagement Coordinator for Greater Hartford, Journey Home CT](#)

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

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

[Danielle Hubley, Advocacy & Education Manager, Partnership for Strong Communities](#)

[Melora Johnson, Board Member of Open Doors](#)

[Agustin Lopez, Senior Director, Specialized Community Services, Mental Health Connecticut](#)

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

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

[Liam Nangle](#)

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

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

[Jim Pettinelli, Liberty Community Services](#)

[Sarah Riley, Psychiatrist](#)

[Hannah Smith, Director of Shelter Services, Beth-El Center, Inc](#)

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

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

[Nadine Malone, CAN Manager, Journey Home](#) – Nadine Malone is in support of this bill and asked that it be amended to follow national best practices. They stated, "By formalizing the work of the Interagency Task Force into a Council, we can ensure that resources and efforts

across state agencies are better aligned and more effectively utilized." They explained that there are multiple state agencies currently involved in addressing homelessness, but the coordination between these agencies can be fragmented, so establishing an Interagency Council on Homelessness will bring key stakeholders together, allowing the state to better "identify gaps in services, share resources, and avoid duplication of efforts."

[Matthew Morgan, Executive Director, Journey Home](#) – Matthew Morgan is in support of this bill and asked that it be amended to follow national best practices. They discussed funds from ARPA in 2024 that allowed them to assist, "21 partner agencies to support 228 unique households to overcome assorted barriers to stable housing with these funds which cost a total of \$464,551." They stated that the funds were temporary and needed to be annualized to inflation to continue serving households.

The following testimonies expressed general support of the bill:

[Vanessa Anonymous](#)

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

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

[Joshua Caskey](#)

[Eliza Halsey, Community Services Administrator, City of New Haven](#)

[Maq Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut](#)

[Michelle Noehren](#)

[Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#)

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

[David Reynolds, Associate Director for Public Policy, CT Catholic Public Affairs Conference](#)

[Joe Simons](#)

[Katharine Weldy, Homes with Hope](#)

[Liza Andrews, VP of Government & Public Relations](#)

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

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

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

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

[Caitlin Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Friendship Service Center Inc.](#)

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

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

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

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

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

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

Date: 3/4/2025