
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5260

AN ACT PROHIBITING A MUNICIPALITY FROM IMPOSING A PENALTY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING.

SUMMARY

This bill generally prohibits municipalities from adopting or enforcing ordinances that prohibit a homeless person from using municipally controlled publicly accessible outdoor areas for certain activities. These activities include, among others, eating or resting; sleeping in a legally parked vehicle; soliciting donations; and accessing medical care. The bill allows municipalities to adopt or enforce ordinances if necessary to prevent a danger or likely danger to public health, welfare, or safety.

The bill uses the same broad definition of “homeless person” that applies in federal laws on the Interagency Council on Homelessness and certain homelessness response programs. The term refers to, among others, people (1) who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; (2) with a primary nighttime residence not designed for use as a regular sleeping place (such as a car, park, or transit station); (3) who reside in a shelter or similar temporary living arrangement; or (4) imminently at risk of losing their housing. It also broadly includes children and domestic violence victims lacking safe or stable housing.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

PROTECTED ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC PLACES

Public Places

Generally, the bill’s restriction on ordinances affecting homeless people applies to activities in “public places.” This means land that is (1) municipally owned or managed and (2) publicly accessible. The bill specifies that public places do not include:

1. the interior areas of a structure,
2. state-owned property in the custody of the Department of Transportation,
3. commercial airports, or
4. land containing a nursery or K-12 school.

Covered Activities

The bill lists activities that a municipality cannot stop homeless people from doing in public places, if they can be done safely:

1. using public places freely like other people can (for example, walking through them);
2. sleeping, resting, eating, drinking, and accessing medical care;
3. soliciting food, water, money, or other donations;
4. protecting themselves from the elements; and
5. occupying or sleeping in a legally parked vehicle (like a car or camper).

The bill also generally prohibits municipalities from stopping homeless people from using publicly accessible hygiene facilities, if other people are allowed to use them.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sHB 5235, favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, requires the Department of Transportation, (1) before removing an encampment located on a state highway right-of-way or state-owned property under its control, to generally give at least 14 days' written notice to occupants, and (2) jointly with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, to study and make recommendations on best practices for responding to, managing, or removing an encampment.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 13 Nay 6 (03/10/2026)