

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-251—sSB 896

Public Health Committee

Planning and Development Committee

Judiciary Committee

Human Services Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING A HOMELESS PERSON'S BILL OF RIGHTS

SUMMARY: This act establishes a bill of rights for the state's homeless individuals, as defined under federal law (see BACKGROUND). It specifies that these rights are available only to the extent that they are implemented in accordance with state law, rules, and regulations; federal law; and the state and U.S. constitutions.

Under the bill of rights, each homeless person has the right to:

1. move freely in public spaces (e.g., parks, buildings, sidewalks, and public transportation) in the same manner as other people and without harassment or intimidation by law enforcement officers;
2. have equal employment opportunities;
3. receive emergency medical care;
4. register to vote and vote;
5. have their personal information protected and a reasonable expectation of privacy in their personal property; and
6. receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies.

The act allows each municipality to (1) create a notice entitled "HOMELESS PERSON'S BILL OF RIGHTS" that includes the above rights and (2) post the notice in the usual location for municipal notices.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

BACKGROUND

Federal Definition of Homelessness

Under federal law, a homeless person or family (1) has no fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence; (2) has a primary residence that is not designed for regular accommodation (e.g., a car, abandoned building, or park); (3) resides in a temporary shelter or other facility; or (4) is in danger of immediately losing their housing. The definition also addresses situations involving domestic violence or other life-threatening conditions (42 USC § 11302).

OLR Tracking: ND:DC:TA:ts