



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 56**

January Session, 2023

House Bill No. 6601

*House of Representatives, March 14, 2023*

The Committee on Public Health reported through REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY of the 133rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT DECLARING HOMELESSNESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) It is hereby declared that  
2 homelessness constitutes a public health crisis in this state and will  
3 continue to constitute a public health crisis until the right of homeless  
4 persons to receive essential medical and mental health care services, as  
5 guaranteed pursuant to subsection (b) of section 1-500 of the general  
6 statutes, as amended by this act, is adequately safeguarded and  
7 protected.

8 Sec. 2. Section 1-500 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
9 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

10 (a) There is created a Homeless Person's Bill of Rights to guarantee  
11 that the rights, privacy and property of homeless persons are adequately  
12 safeguarded and protected under the laws of this state. The rights  
13 afforded homeless persons to ensure that their person, privacy and  
14 property are safeguarded and protected, as set forth in subsection (b) of  
15 this section, are available only insofar as they are implemented in

16 accordance with other parts of the general statutes, state rules and  
17 regulations, federal law, the state Constitution and the United States  
18 Constitution. For purposes of this section, "homeless person" has the  
19 same meaning as in 42 USC 11302, as amended from time to time.

20 (b) Each homeless person in this state has the right to:

21 (1) Move freely in public spaces, including on public sidewalks, in  
22 public parks, on public transportation and in public buildings without  
23 harassment or intimidation from law enforcement officers in the same  
24 manner as other persons;

25 (2) Have equal opportunities for employment;

26 (3) Receive [emergency] essential medical and mental health care  
27 services;

28 (4) Register to vote and to vote;

29 (5) Have personal information protected;

30 (6) Have a reasonable expectation of privacy in his or her personal  
31 property; and

32 (7) Receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies.

33 (c) Each municipality may post in the usual location for municipal  
34 notices a notice entitled "HOMELESS PERSON'S BILL OF RIGHTS" that  
35 contains the text set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	1-500

**PH**            *Joint Favorable*

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*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill, which declares that homelessness is a public health crisis and makes changes to the Homeless Person's Bill of Rights, does not result in a fiscal impact to the State or municipalities.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 6601*****AN ACT DECLARING HOMELESSNESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill declares homelessness a public health crisis that will continue until the right of homeless persons to receive essential medical and mental health care services (the bill does not define these terms) is adequately safeguarded and protected.

It also makes a corresponding change to the homeless person's bill of rights to specify that a person has the right to receive essential medical and mental health care services instead of emergency medical services, as under current law.

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

1. move freely in public spaces in the same way as other people, without harassment or intimidation by law enforcement officers;
2. have equal employment opportunities;
3. register to vote and vote;
4. have their personal information protected and a reasonable expectation of privacy in their personal property; and
5. receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**BACKGROUND*****Definition of Homelessness***

Under the homeless person's bill of rights, 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 (42 U.S.C. § 11302).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 34 Nay 1 (03/03/2023)