

To: Representative Stephen M. Casey, Chair, and members of the  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee Members  
From: Bernie Beaudreau, Community Volunteer, unaffiliated - Rumford, RI  
Date: February 11, 2026  
Re: **Support for H-7225 Emergency Shelters**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 7225 Emergency Shelters. I would like to thank Representatives Lombardi, Hull, Ajello, Potter, Cruz and Steward for sponsoring this bill.

My testimony is informed by my lifetime career in human services and specifically my volunteer work with the homeless over the past 14 months.

In recent weeks I have visited and volunteered at shelters, day services and encamped homeless where I have provided heating fuel for surviving the deep freeze of this winter. I have written about these experiences and shared them with the members of our state legislature and general public in hopes that I could increase awareness and connect you personally with the daily struggles and suffering of so many people. I can tell you with certainty that any and all provisions for our homeless population is greatly needed, including those provided by this bill H-7225.

I have seen overcrowded conditions at shelters where there are not enough beds, especially during our recent extreme cold snaps. One overnight warming center has people sleeping in chairs and at tables with not cots, beds or even floor mats to sleep on. Homeless people in these conditions suffer from lack of sleep and are expected to spend their days accomplishing many tasks with bodies weary and aching. Several people I've met have been hospitalized following nights of sitting up and damaging circulation in their legs, with edema and risk of DVT. Any warming shelter that is open all night long should abide by the rules of shelters and provide sufficient sleeping accommodations.