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Dear Chairman and Honorable Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

I am writing to express my support for H8000 and offer suggestions for its improvement.

1. I recommend extending the notice period from 15 to 30 days to allow for adequate time to find alternative housing solutions and initiate case management services for those affected.
2. To address the destruction of personal documents during encampment clearances, I propose holding the responsible agency financially accountable for the cost of replacing essential documents, medications, and other necessary items.
3. Establishing a well-defined notification process with third-party oversight would enhance transparency and protection for all parties involved.

As someone with lived experience of homelessness and now an advocate for those in similar situations, I believe these amendments will strengthen the legislation and provide a clearer path towards stable housing for individuals facing homelessness. My personal journey from living in a tent to advocating at the state and national levels has shown me the importance of compassionate support and effective policies in helping individuals overcome homelessness.

I have faced challenges, including illness and uncertainty, but with the support of programs like motel shelters and cooperative apartments, I am on the path to secure housing. However, the financial burden of these programs highlights the need for more affordable and sustainable housing options for all Rhode Islanders. As a volunteer at an overnight warming shelter, I witness the resilience of my neighbors experiencing homelessness every night. Their determination inspires me to continue advocating for better housing solutions for our community.

Thank you for considering these recommendations and for your commitment to addressing homelessness in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Donald King