

Dawn Huntley

From: Laurie Hanna <lahocean@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2026 5:46 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Cc: Rep. Ajello, Edith H.; Sen. Zurier, Samuel
Subject: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING, in favor of House Bill 8001 ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- STATE BUILDING CODE -- ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT {LC5591/1}

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Chairman Casey and members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee;

I am writing to you to voice my support of House Bill 8001, which would authorize municipalities to allow for construction and use of SAFE units, creating shelter for the homeless. In these uncertain times, more Rhode Islanders are facing eviction and homelessness. As an older individual, I am particularly (but not exclusively) concerned about the plight of older Rhode Islanders. According to the US Dept of Health and Human Services, older adults are the fastest growing group experiencing homelessness. In RI alone, there has been a 33% jump in the seniors experiencing homelessness.

Please step up, and help house the most vulnerable individuals in our society. It is the right thing to do.

Thank you.

Laurie Hanna

Talking Points

- This bill would make it easier for municipalities to create shelter for the homeless in times of need.
- AARP estimates that between 2023 and 2027 over 800 older Rhode Islanders (65+) will face eviction.
- AARP estimates that between 2023 and 2027 over 300 older Rhode Islanders (65+) will be homeless.
- Older adults are less likely than younger people to survive exposure to the severe weather conditions people who are homeless must endure.
- According to AARP/Statista analysis of Census Bureau data, an estimated 238,083 older Americans age 55 and older experienced homelessness in 2023.
- According to Crossroads Rhode Island in 2023 they saw a 33 percent increase in seniors over the age of 65 experiencing homelessness.

According to a 2023 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services report older adults are the fastest-growing age group of those experiencing homelessness