



Director's Office

One Capitol Hill | Providence, RI 02908 | (401) 222-2280

Jonathan Womer, Director

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chairperson, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 8000 -- An Act Relating To Property -- Homeless Bill Of Rights

Dear Chairperson Casey,

Thank you for providing the Department of Administration (the "Department") the opportunity to submit our concerns in response to House Bill No. 8000. The bill seeks to achieve the laudable goal of creating statutory perimeters that provide structure to state and local governments' approach to encampments while providing supports to the unhoused community. With that said, some of the vagaries of the current draft may undermine the bill's goals and present challenges with implementation.

The bill states public property owners need not provide fifteen (15) days notice before immediate "forcible removal or relocation of encampments on public property" if "[t]here is otherwise an immediate public safety or health concern regarding the location of the encampment." The lack of specificity regarding what constitutes a "public safety or health concern" may make the legislation difficult to administer.

Further, the bill as currently drafted requires a fifteen (15) day written notice to occupants before removal or relocation. This notice requirement may prove difficult to implement due to the evolving population of many encampments. For example, notice may be given to an occupant of an encampment who is then properly removed/relocated after the fifteen (15) day period, but the encampment will remain active and growing because new occupants have moved in after the initial notice date. The legislation is unclear whether the presence of new occupants would reset the fifteen (15) day notice period or if the notice is tied to the status of the encampment itself.

Finally, many public properties have existing safety and operation policies that ensure the smooth operations of such properties so that they may be utilized by the general public. This legislation is unclear how its provisions would interact with said existing policies and protocols. For example, State-owned parks close at a predetermined time and must be vacated at such time to allow for maintenance operations and to ensure the safe use of the facility. Clarity is required as to whether this legislation supersedes such policies.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns over this legislation with the Committee. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact my office at your convenience.

3/5/2026

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Womer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Jonathan Womer
Director, Department of Administration

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker of the House
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Dawn Huntley, Committee Clerk