

**Testimony Re: S-2264, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE --
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee**

March 26, 2026

Greetings Chairperson Bissaillon and Committee Members,

I'm writing in strong support of S2264 providing alerts to trigger procedures for municipalities to follow during extreme heat or cold to help at-risk individuals stay safe.

While the goal for our state should be permanent housing for all, we are years away from that happening. In the meantime no human being should ever have to sleep outdoors especially in dangerous temperatures. Warming and cooling centers can provide life-saving infrastructure for those who are unhoused, preventing serious injury and death.

Programs like Operation NOD (No One Dies) brought together a community of people working to make sure no one died because they were forced to live outside. The goal was simple, to keep people safe and provide for their basic needs with dignity and care when the weather became dangerous. Many non-profits and some churches stepped in to create this very successful program but tragically there were still not enough shelters to prevent at least three people from dying because of the extreme temperatures and weather. This legislation would provide municipalities with the tools to provide that level of service to those who are unhoused which is a compassionate and practical approach.

Providing high quality shelter for anyone unhoused **every** night should be the standard, but it is encouraging that the temperature activating the "alerts" is 36 degrees, not ideal but moving in the right direction. Unfortunately the temperatures for hot humid days still seem dangerously high.

Opening shelters at higher temperatures during the winter months improves the physical and mental health of unhoused individuals. It reduces the strain on healthcare systems, eases financial burdens on communities, and mitigates stress for both family and community members. It is a compassionate and practical approach

Finally preventing death caused by inadequate shelter should not be aspirational but instead policy. This bill is one of many policy changes providin an easier path to keeping those who are unhoused safe.

"A warming shelter is more than a building — it's a community response, a safety net, and a reflection of who we choose to be when our neighbors need us most." -LAMP Program, Georgia

Thank you,
Kendra Anderson

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