

Submitter: Rachel Freed
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3644

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3644, which mandates the Housing and Community Services Department to establish a statewide shelter program. While I recognize the urgent need to address homelessness in our communities, I believe that this bill promotes flawed solutions that fail to tackle the root causes of this complex issue.

One of my primary concerns is the lack of transparency and accountability for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that would receive funding under this program. Without clear requirements for transparency, there is a significant risk that funds may not be utilized effectively or equitably. Citizens should have confidence that their tax dollars are being spent wisely and in a manner that genuinely benefits those in need.

Furthermore, the proposed approach seems to encourage a temporary fix rather than a long-term solution. By prioritizing shelter provision without adequately addressing the underlying issues—such as affordable housing, mental health services, and job training—we risk perpetuating a cycle of homelessness. This bill could inadvertently enable homelessness by providing short-term relief that does not lead to sustainable outcomes.

I urge you to reconsider the implications of HB 3644 and advocate for a more comprehensive strategy that ensures accountability, promotes transparency, and focuses on addressing the systemic issues contributing to homelessness. We need solutions that empower individuals and families to regain stability, rather than simply providing a stopgap measure.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I hope you will stand with me in opposing HB 3644 and work towards solutions that make a real difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness.