

Submitter: Colleen Roberts
On Behalf Of: myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB603

Chair Jama

Vice Chair Anderson

Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Senate Bill 603, Public Hearing February 27, 2023, 8:00 am.

I strongly encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 603.

As written, this bill provides \$1,000 of funding per month to homeless individuals for use for, “payments may be used for rent, emergency expenses, food, childcare or other goods or services of the participants choosing.” The ambiguity of this statement is extremely problematic and, in my opinion, provides ample opportunity for fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer dollars. While the intent may be to assist individuals, the generality in this bill may only serve to fuel addiction and other harmful habits that are a large root of our state’s homelessness issues. Providing money recklessly without help and support could cause more harm than good. Conversely giving them tools, resources and teaching skills can empower individuals to make their own choices and solve problems. Consider the adage: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”.

Doing nothing is not the answer. But rather than possibly subsidizing an individual’s harmful habits and behaviors, I find it a much more sound and fiscally responsible approach to further invest in meaningful programs available to offer help and aid those with housing challenges, and not just a handout--- but a hand-up! Statewide funding through recent managed programs have led to positive impacts in our region with the development of a regional Navigation Center, transitional house being developed at area motels, and urban campgrounds being constructed through partnerships with local non-profits. I firmly believe efforts like these are where state funding should be focused, as they provide impactful and direct means of assisting those struggling with housing in our communities, while ensuring funds are used in a responsible and accountable manner.

For these reasons, I personally encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 603.

Colleen Roberts