

# Housing Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5260 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT PROHIBITING A MUNICIPALITY FROM IMPOSING A PENALTY FOR  
**Title:** THE PERFORMANCE OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING.

**Vote Date:** 3/10/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/24/2026

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Housing Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill prohibits municipalities from criminalizing activities of daily living by those experiencing homelessness. The bill intends to protect individuals from facing criminal penalties for experiencing homelessness.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**National Alliance on Mental Illness Connecticut, Thomas Burr, Public Policy Manager** submitted testimony on behalf of NAMI Connecticut in support of the legislation. NAMI believes that this bill would correct the negative impact of the Supreme Court decision *Johnson v. Grants Pass* allowing individuals to be arrested, ticketed, or fined for sheltering in public spaces while unhoused. They additionally note that penalizing homelessness strains municipalities, harms community members, and does not address the root cause of the issue. Instead, NAMI recommends investing in a statewide prevention approach that prioritizes affordable housing, physical and mental health care, and providing a living wage.

**Ovanis Aquino, Unhoused Individual** submitted testimony supporting HB 5260. They state that the harassment of homeless people by cities and the state is wrong. Instead, municipalities and the state should be assisting them. They believe the bill would alleviate stress on homeless individuals who fear being fined or arrested for living. They also state that

they have lost important personal documents, including their birth certificate, social security information, and license from being arrested.

**CT Coalition to End Homelessness, Sarah Fox, CEO** submitted written testimony in support of the legislation. She cites numerous statistics regarding homelessness in Connecticut. She states that ticketing, fining, arresting, or displacing homeless individuals for sleeping outside does not reduce homelessness. Rather, she explains that it makes it more difficult to exit homelessness by creating court debt, records, and other issues that can make finding housing or employment more difficult. Fox continues, stating that when homelessness is responded to with citations and arrests, the costs are shifted into police time, ambulances, hospital stays, and correctional facilities. She believes that this bill, if passed, will establish that the state will not penalize people for basic, unavoidable activities of daily living when there are not any safe alternatives.

**Partnership for Strong Communities, Sean Ghio, Policy Director**, on behalf of PSC, submitted testimony in support of the bill. PSC asked that the committee pass this legislation, thereby codifying protections for people experiencing homelessness into state law. PSC believes that by supporting this bill, it will reaffirm the legislature's commitment to human dignity and practical solutions.

**Hartford City Council, Josh Michtom, Hartford City Councilman** submitted testimony in support of HB 5260. He describes historical accounts of criminalizing homelessness, and notes that with our current understanding of current driving factors of the issue that we should not utilize the same antiquated techniques. Instead, he urges us to approach the issue with compassion and care and wishes to pass this legislation to start tackling the issue.

**Homes with Hope, Helen McAlinden, President and CEO** submitted testimony in support of the legislation. She first notes that homelessness in Connecticut has risen dramatically since 2021. She believes that penalizing those who are experiencing homelessness does not help the problem, and housing does.

**Connecticut Legal Services, Rafael Podolsky, Attorney and Housing Advocate** submitted testimony supporting the bill. He explains the bill, noting that the bill explicitly does not prevent a town from prohibiting activities that are likely to endanger health, safety, or welfare.

**Connecticut Fair Housing Center, Sarah White, Attorney** submitted testimony in support of the legislation. She first cites statistics that we are lacking affordable housing, and it has an impact on the increase in the homeless population in Connecticut. Additionally, White states that there are various inequities in the housing system that are leading to issues finding affordable housing, and so those who are victims of these flaws should not be punished for it. She the committee to pass this legislation to avoid discriminatory actions toward unhoused people.

**Fabiola Arbelo Cruz, Addiction Psychiatrist** submitted testimony in support of the proposed legislation. Cruz notes that for many unhoused individuals, shelter is not a viable option as they are frequently at capacity, have long waiting lists, and permanent supportive housing is in short supply. She believes that individuals should not be punished for surviving outdoors when no adequate alternatives exist.

**CT DSA, Hillary Desideraggio** submitted testimony in support of the bill. She notes that homeless populations have many challenges they face every day, and she believes that being criminalized for living somewhere when there is no alternative option is wrong. Instead, the state should focus on preventing homelessness.

**Columbus House, Scott McCall, Case Manager** supports this bill. He states that those experiencing homelessness do not do so because they choose to, and therefore they should not be punished for it.

**Raymond Hinds** submitted testimony in support of this legislation. He states that it is important to remember that homeless individuals are humans, and it is important to treat them as such, rather than penalizing them for something that is not their fault.

**Universal Health Care Foundation, Quinn Meehan, Policy MSW Intern** submitted testimony in support of the bill. They state that penalizing individuals for activities of daily living worsens their situations. Meehan then notes that housing stability is one of the strongest predictors of health, and as people are pushed further into instability, there are increased emergency room visits, worsening chronic conditions, declining mental health, and higher Medicaid costs.

**Friendship Service Center, Caitlin Rose, Chief Executive Officer** submitted testimony in support of the proposed legislation. She states that this bill is important, but what is also important is to address homelessness with a multi-prong approach, including increasing housing supply, rental protections, and providing reasonable wages.

**Eddie Baker** submitted written testimony in support of the bill. He accounts for his experience as an unhoused individual in his testimony and states his belief that the bill is a good idea.

**U-ACT, Shannon Carter** submitted testimony supporting the bill. Carter states that law enforcement sweeps increase overdose death, worsen chronic conditions, and contribute to trauma that prevents individuals from escaping cycles of addiction and mental illness. She believes no individual should be treated poorly for simply being homeless.

**Annie Harper, Assistant Professor** supported the bill and emphasized it is inhumane to penalize unhoused individuals who are victims of the state's lack of affordable housing.

**Angelo Bochanis** submitted testimony in support of the legislation. He begins by explaining that the homelessness crisis in Connecticut has surged as rising housing prices pushed people out of their homes. He continues, stating that penalties for being homeless force people deeper into homelessness rather than helping them escape it.

**U-ACT, Billy Bromage, Co-lead Organizer** submitted testimony in support of the bill. He states that time spent worrying about being ticketed or other enforcement measures takes vital time away from those individuals to go to work, look for work, attending school, or meeting with housing or health professionals. He additionally calls for openness and transparency if the bill is amended.

**Advocacy Unlimited, Inc., Carl Mancini, Business Manager** submitted testimony in support of the bill. He believes the bill would correct the harm done by *Johnson v. Grants Pass*. He continues, stating that since there is a mental health component to the homelessness, that this bill is important to not criminalize those who need help.

**Meredith Hanrahan-Boshes** submitted testimony in support of HB 5260. She states that criminalizing those experiencing homelessness is both wrong and counterproductive. Additionally, she notes that many victims of homelessness lack the strength, support, or ability to survive this process while finding shelter, food, or struggling with mental health conditions.

**Andrew Rice for Congress, Andrew Rice** submitted testimony in support of the bill. He states that in his district of Milford, he has had deaths due to homelessness. He believes that instead of fining and criminalizing unhoused individuals, the state should be helping them find housing.

**U-ACT, Alexis Terry** submitted testimony in support of HB 5260. She explains that this bill would be logical to pass as the state and country are experiencing a housing crisis. She emphasizes that as many do not have tangible connections to loved ones anymore, their personal belongings can hold those, and they can be lost because of sweeps and other enforcement measures. She states that unhoused individuals are worth legislative representation.

**Daniel Mulligan, Postdoctoral Fellow** supports the bill. He uses his personal experience working with unhoused individuals in Detroit and Atlanta to emphasize his belief that the state needs a long-term, proactive strategy to tackle homelessness, and he believes that this bill is part of that strategy.

**Good Neighbors Community Fund, Colleen Shaddox, Chair** submitted testimony in support of the bill. She uses her personal experience as a volunteer and a journalist in her testimony. She emphasizes the fact that unhoused individuals must be treated as human beings.

**Miranda Savioli, MD** supports the bill. She states that police involvement is a large part of unhoused patient stress, and that this bill will help alleviate that. She cites statistics in her written testimony linked above.

**Sierra-Marie Gerfao, Reverend** submitted testimony in support of the bill. Gerfao's testimony tells a story of when they experienced temporary displacement on a trip, and though it was temporary, it shed light on the experience of those who must deal with it full time.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in support of the bill. They are an unhoused individual and note that nobody chooses to be homeless. They state that citizens should come together to help those in need.

These individuals submitted testimony in support of the bill. They believe that it is a failure of the current system that people become homeless, and those victims should not be criminalized.

Party for Socialism and Liberation, Lucy A  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Democratic Socialists of America, Liam Conway  
Tim Gabriele  
Leonardo Pavon, Stratford Resident

Emma Lo, MD supported the bill, emphasizing how detrimental encampment clearings can be to a homeless persons' mental and physical health, as well as the unfairness of penalizing individuals when there are no available shelter beds.

These individuals submitted testimony in general support of the bill:

CT Food Sovereignty Collective, Meg Hourigan, Co-founder  
Roger Boshes, MD PhD  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
U-ACT, Anonymous  
Zion B  
Ginny Bromage  
Julia Byron  
CTTU, Jared Cavagnuolo  
Nami Cotto  
U-ACT, Gary Deraleau  
John DiGiacomo  
Berta E  
Greg Edwards  
CTTU, Andrew Fermo, Union Member  
CTTU, Caroline Fermo, Development Coordinator  
Joseph Foran  
Nancy Foster  
Eddie Gist  
Ja H  
CTTU, Calder Hudson  
Benjamin Hurley  
Michael J, Unhoused Individual  
Aaron K  
Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Claudette Kidd, Client Engagement Specialistv  
Emily L, Community Counselor  
George Moore  
Ike Odi  
Debra Pellescine, Unhoused Individual  
Nathison Peters  
Lauren Pittman (Sun Queen), Community Organizer  
Tran Phong  
Brooke Ramlakhan

Steven Rene  
Julio Rijos  
Larry Rizzolo  
Jason Ruiz  
Rebecca Schneider  
CT DSA, Christopher Smith  
Shannon Smith  
Esther St. Juste  
NBRJC, Alicia Strong, Co-director  
Anthony Torres  
Melinda Tuhus  
Cheryl Tyler  
Lori Wallace  
Clara Warden, Physician  
Andrew Warshall  
Diamond Watts  
Terrance Williams  
Bridgett Williamson  
Jeremy Woodward  
Berhanetensay Woube  
Mahdere Yared

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Randy Collins, Associate Director of Policy submitted testimony on behalf of The CCM in opposition to HB 5260. They believe the bill would remove local control to enact tailored ordinances to respond to the needs, character, and resources of their community. They additionally state that the bill risks hampering local law enforcement and code officials in their ability of maintaining safe and accessible public spaces. Overall, The CCM thinks the bill represents an overreach that undermines local authority, public safety, and community well-being.

Town of Harwinton, Michael Criss, First Selectman submitted testimony in opposition to the bill. He notes three main concerns for municipalities. First, he explains that the bill would undermine local authority, therefore removing the ability of towns to appropriately cater their ordinances toward issues that occur in their jurisdiction. Second, he believes the bill will generate public health and sanitation concerns, as “broadly restricting” municipal ability to regulate certain activities can limit a municipality’s ability to address issues with sanitation, waste disposal, and public safety. Third, Michael states that the legislation can create conflict and confusion with existing municipal regulations regarding parking, park hours, and use of public facilities.

Town of Old Saybrook, Carl Fortuna, First Selectman submitted testimony in opposition to the bill. Carl states that the bill will undermine a municipality’s ability to protect the health and safety of the public and prevent disruptive conduct.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Betsy Gara, Executive Director submitted written testimony on behalf of COST in opposition to HB 5260. While COST supports allocating more

funding to the state DOH's homelessness prevention and response programs, they believe that this bill would undermine a municipality's ability to address issues that pose public health and safety concerns in their community.

**Connecticut Realtors, Jim Heckman, General Counsel** submitted written testimony on behalf of CT Realtors in opposition to the bill. CT Realtors note that the bill's language can be interpreted as vague and cites numerous issues they have with the bill. These concerns include definitions, issues involving parking, and solicitations in public areas.

**Harland Christofferson** submitted written testimony opposing the bill. He acknowledges the humanitarian intent behind the bill but is opposed to the direction that he believes the bill could take the state down. He notes pros and cons of the bill in his written testimony, but ultimately, he states the bill addresses symptoms rather than the causes of homelessness.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in opposition to the proposed legislation. They state that the bill eliminates municipal authority to manage their public spaces without any additional infrastructure or funding from the state. They continue, stating their belief that the bill would risk normalizing unsafe conditions in public spaces, creating legal ambiguity, and incentivizing encampments.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in opposition to the bill. They note that similar legislation has been tried and failed in other states.

These individuals submitted testimony in general opposition to the bill:

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

**Chip Banker, Landlord**

**Barbara Fairbanks**

**Sally Finck**

**Brian Fitzpatrick**

**Freedom Property LLC, Luke Florian, Member**

**Lena Gjomaj**

**Ellen Jacob, Resident**

**C. Marcella Kurowski**

**Selina Rifkin**

**Jorge Rodriguez**

**Daniel S.**

**Reported by: Michael Flynn**

**Date: 3/23/2026**