

2011 -- S 0539

LC02057

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES - SUPPORT OF HOMELESS

Introduced By: Senators DeVall, Tassoni, P Fogarty, Pichardo, and Crowley

Date Introduced: March 10, 2011

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 40-17-1, 40-17-2, 40-17-3, 40-17-4 and 40-17-5 of the General
2 Laws in Chapter 40-17 entitled "Support of Homeless" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **40-17-1. Legislative findings.** -- (a) The general assembly hereby finds that there exists
4 in this state undetermined numbers of homeless persons, many of whom suffer from chronic
5 mental illness and disability, and that this condition exists among families and among individuals
6 of all age groups without regard to ethnic or racial heritage or sex. The existence of this condition
7 is declared to be detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the homeless individuals
8 themselves and to the state.

9 ~~(b) The general assembly further finds and declares that this condition is particularly~~
10 ~~pronounced in the city of Providence, the state's largest city which draws homeless people from~~
11 ~~throughout the state.~~

12 **40-17-2. Purpose Agency established.** - ~~It is the purpose of this chapter to:~~

13 ~~(1) Establish a pilot program to aid and assist homeless and mentally ill individuals in~~
14 ~~the city of Providence;~~

15 ~~(2) Identify the extent of the homeless problem in the state;~~

16 ~~(3) Examine the effectiveness of current programs dealing with the homeless; and~~

17 ~~(4) Propose new programs and modification and coordination of existing programs to~~
18 ~~address the needs and problems of the homeless.~~

19 (a) There is hereby created a permanent council to be called the "Interagency Council on

1 Homelessness" consisting of fifteen (15) members and one ex-officio member:

2 (1) One of whom shall be the director of the department of administration, or his or her
3 designee, who shall chair the Interagency Council on Homelessness;

4 (2) One of whom shall be the chair of the housing resources commission, or his or her
5 designee;

6 (3) One of whom shall be the director of the department of human services, or his or her
7 designee;

8 (4) One of whom shall be the director of the department of health, or his or her designee;

9 (5) One of whom shall be the director of the department of children, youth, and families,
10 or his or her designee;

11 (6) One of whom shall be the director of elderly affairs, or his or her designee;

12 (7) One of whom shall be the director of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities
13 and hospitals, or his or her designee;

14 (8) One of whom shall be director of the department of labor and training, or his or her
15 designee;

16 (9) One of whom shall be the director of the department of corrections, or his or her
17 designee;

18 (10) One of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of elementary or
19 secondary education, or his or her designee;

20 (11) One of whom shall be the director of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage
21 finance corporation, or his or her designee;

22 (12) One of whom shall be the chief of the office of housing and community
23 development, or his or her designee;

24 (13) One of whom shall be the director of emergency management agency, or his or her
25 designee;

26 (14) One of whom shall be a representative from the Rhode Island division/department of
27 veterans' affairs or his or her designee;

28 (15) One of whom shall be the public defender, or his or her designee; and

29 (16) One of whom shall be an ex-officio member who shall be the chair, or his or her
30 designee, of the Interagency Council on Homelessness Advisory Council as described in this
31 chapter herein.

32 (b) Forthwith upon the effective date of this chapter, the members of the commission
33 shall meet at the call of the chair and organize. Vacancies in the commission shall be filled in like
34 manner as the original appointment.

1 (c) The membership of the council shall receive no compensation for their services, but
2 shall be allowed their travel and necessary expenses. The commission may engage such clerical,
3 technical, and other assistance as it may deem necessary, and spend such other funds as is
4 necessary to accomplish its purpose.

5 (d) The department of administration is hereby directed to provide suitable quarters and
6 staff for the commission.

7 (e) All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,
8 documentary, and otherwise to the commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable
9 by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this chapter.

10 ~~**40-17-3. Program established Duties and responsibilities of council. - There is hereby**~~
11 ~~established a pilot program to aid and assist homeless mentally ill individuals in the city of~~
12 ~~Providence by providing psychiatric and social services directly to individuals and families in~~
13 ~~meal sites, shelters, public and private social agencies, on the street, and in any other places~~
14 ~~where homeless individuals may be found.~~

15 The duties and responsibilities of the Council shall be:

16 (1) To develop a strategic plan to end homelessness aligned with the federal strategic plan
17 to end homelessness that will serve to reduce the number of homeless individuals and families in
18 Rhode Island;

19 (2) To coordinate services for the homeless among state agencies and instrumentalities,
20 community based organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations, advocacy
21 groups and businesses;

22 (3) To coordinate services not specifically for the homeless, but from which the homeless
23 may benefit, among state agencies and instrumentalities, community based organizations, faith-
24 based organizations, volunteer organizations, advocacy groups and businesses; and

25 (4) To identify and seek to remedy gaps in services, specifically in the area of making
26 provisions for the availability, use and permanent funding stream for permanent supportive
27 housing.

28 ~~**40-17-4. Designation of agency Meeting and reporting requirements. - The**~~
29 ~~Providence center for counseling and psychiatric services ("center") is hereby designated as the~~
30 ~~agency to administer and develop the homeless mentally ill aid and assistance program~~
31 ~~("program") in the city of Providence. The departments of human services and mental health,~~
32 ~~retardation, and hospitals shall provide advice and assistance to the center in developing this~~
33 ~~program and shall review the performance of the center. The center shall make a report on the~~
34 ~~administration and progress of this program and report its findings concerning the homeless to the~~

1 ~~"commission on the homeless" on or before February 1, 1989 and shall make such interim reports~~
2 ~~as the commission shall require.~~

3 Meeting and reporting requirements are as follows:

4 (1) The council shall meet regularly;

5 (2) The council shall provide the strategic plan and specific recommendations to prevent
6 and end homelessness to the governor, senate president, speaker of the house, the senate
7 committee on housing and municipal government and the house corporations committee by
8 October 1, 2011,

9 (3) The council shall provide a report on funding available during calendar year 2011 for
10 services, facilities, programs or otherwise for people who are homeless. Said report shall be
11 provided to the senate president, speaker of the house, senate fiscal advisor and house fiscal
12 advisor by January 31, 2012.

13 (4) The council shall report annually to the governor and the general assembly, no later
14 than March of each year, on the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives set forth in
15 the strategic plan, on the current number of homeless individuals, families, and children and any
16 other pertinent information.

17 **40-17-5. Commission established** ~~Advisory council established.~~ -- ~~(a) There is hereby~~
18 ~~created a permanent legislative commission to be called the "commission on the homeless"~~
19 ~~consisting of twenty (20) members:~~

20 ~~(1) Two (2) of whom shall be from the house of representatives, not more than one from~~
21 ~~the same political party to be appointed by the speaker, of whom two (2) may be members of the~~
22 ~~general public appointed in lieu of legislative appointments;~~

23 ~~(2) Two (2) of whom shall be from the senate, not more than one from the same political~~
24 ~~party to be appointed by the president of the senate, of whom two (2) may be members of the~~
25 ~~general public appointed in lieu of legislative appointments;~~

26 ~~(3) One of whom shall be representative of the general public to be appointed by the~~
27 ~~governor;~~

28 ~~(4) One of whom shall be the director of the department of health or his or her designee;~~

29 ~~(5) One of whom shall be the director of the department of human services or his or her~~
30 ~~designee;~~

31 ~~(6) One of whom shall be the director of mental health, retardation, and hospitals or his or~~
32 ~~her designee;~~

33 ~~(7) One of whom shall be the director of children, youth, and families or his or her~~
34 ~~designee;~~

1 ~~(8) One of whom shall be the director of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance~~
2 ~~corporation or his or her designee;~~

3 ~~(9) One of whom shall be the mayor of the city of Providence, or his or her designee;~~

4 ~~(10) One of whom shall be the mayor of Warwick or his or her designee;~~

5 ~~(11) One of whom shall be the mayor of Woonsocket or his or her designee;~~

6 ~~(12) One of whom shall be the mayor of Newport or his or her designee;~~

7 ~~(13) Two (2) of whom shall be representatives of shelters for the homeless located in the~~
8 ~~state to be appointed by the lieutenant governor;~~

9 ~~(14) One of whom shall be the director of the Providence office of the United States~~
10 ~~Department of Housing and Urban Development, or his or her designee;~~

11 ~~(15) One of whom shall be the executive director of the Association of Community~~
12 ~~Mental Health Centers or his or her designee;~~

13 ~~(16) One of whom shall be the executive director of the Council on Domestic Violence or~~
14 ~~his or her designee;~~

15 ~~(17) One of whom shall be the chairperson of the Emergency Food and Shelter Board or~~
16 ~~his or her designee and whose purpose it shall be to identify the extent of the homeless problem in~~
17 ~~the state to evaluate programs for the homeless developed by state and local governments and the~~
18 ~~Providence mental health center;~~

19 ~~to study and make findings concerning homeless individuals and families in the state of~~
20 ~~Rhode Island and to make recommendations to the governor and general assembly concerning~~
21 ~~legislation and programs to assist the homeless.~~

22 ~~(b) Forthwith upon the passage of this chapter, the members of the commission shall~~
23 ~~meet at the call of the governor and organize and shall select from among the members a~~
24 ~~chairperson. Vacancies in the commission shall be filled in like manner as the original~~
25 ~~appointment.~~

26 ~~(c) The membership of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services,~~
27 ~~but shall be allowed their travel and necessary expenses. The commission may engage such~~
28 ~~clerical, technical, and other assistance as it may deem necessary, and spend such other funds as~~
29 ~~is necessary to accomplish its purpose.~~

30 ~~(d) The department of human services is hereby directed to provide suitable quarters and~~
31 ~~staff for the commission.~~

32 ~~(e) All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,~~
33 ~~documentary, and otherwise to the commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable~~
34 ~~by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this chapter.~~

1 (a) There is hereby created a permanent advisory council to the Interagency Council on
2 Homelessness consisting of advocates, service providers, a current or former member of the
3 homeless community, as well as representatives specifically affiliated with youth homelessness to
4 be appointed by the governor. The chair shall be elected by a majority of the members.

5 (b) The purpose of the council is to inform the Interagency Council on Homelessness on
6 the current status and issues facing the homeless throughout Rhode Island.

7 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES - SUPPORT OF HOMELESS

- 1 This act would establish a permanent council known as the "Interagency Council on
- 2 Homelessness" to study and apply solutions for ending homelessness in the state.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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