

NH Coalition to End Homelessness

Representative Terry Roy
House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee
One Granite Place, Room 159
Concord, NH 03301

January 21, 2026

Dear Chairman Roy and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennifer Chisholm, and I am the Executive Director of the NH Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH). On behalf of NHCEH, I present this testimony regarding HB 1091, relative to the penalty for violations of municipal ordinances related to sleeping or camping outside. NHCEH supports this bill.

Homelessness remains a critical issue in the Granite State. During the 2024 Point in Time Count – a 24 hour count of NH residents experiencing homelessness during the end of January each year – unsheltered homelessness in NH increased by 71% (241 individuals). According to NH's preliminary 2025 PIT Count data, this number increased another 13%, to 652 NH residents. **This means that since 2019, the number of people living unsheltered in the Granite State has more than quadrupled.** With this growth in unsheltered homelessness has come the implementation and enforcement of ordinances that ban sleeping or camping on public lands, which can result in fines of up to \$200 per violation. Imposing such fines on people who cannot afford them can lead to complications that make achieving housing stability even more difficult.

NHCEH believes that the implementation of HB 1091 to provide people without financial means an alternative to accruing fines that complicate their already complex situations is a reasonable alternative to a challenging situation for those who are living unsheltered in NH.

NHCEH believes that preventing additional barriers to housing stability is a key prevention measure in the fight against homelessness in NH. We hope you join us in supporting HB 1091.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. NHCEH's mission is to be a statewide partner in reversing the trends NH is experiencing in its homelessness rates and making safe, stable housing accessible to everyone. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at jchisholm@nhceh.org.

Respectfully,



Jennifer Chisholm, LICSW, MLADC
Executive Director
NH Coalition to End Homelessness