

H.B. 596

Homelessness Amendments

Representative Eliason

WHAT H.B. 596 DOES

PROTECTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES WHILE SUPPORTING SHELTERS

Prohibits cities from unilaterally imposing shelter capacity limits, while authorizing the Utah Office of Homeless Services, in coordination with the fire marshal and local partners, to set safety-based, community-informed capacity limits.

ESTABLISHES THE HOMELESS SERVICES RESTRICTED ACCOUNT

Establishes a dedicated funding source to help counties address unsheltered homelessness, including street medicine, outreach, and local response efforts, filling a gap not covered by the existing cities-only mitigation fund.

EXPAND THE MITIGATION FUND

Updates deposit sources and funding formulas for the Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Restricted Account, including directing lease payments into the fund. Improves fairness and predictability for cities that host shelters and bear increased costs for public safety, sanitation, emergency services, and neighborhood mitigation.

IMPROVES SHELTER OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Updates provisions for extreme cold and heat, ensuring consistent statewide emergency shelter activation and coordination to protect individuals experiencing homelessness during dangerous weather conditions, including expanding the capacity limit of a congregate shelter if temperatures rise above 105 degrees Fahrenheit or fall below 25 degrees Fahrenheit.

PROVIDES FINANCIAL STABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Allows the Office of Homeless Services to issue advance payments to homeless service providers to stabilize cash flow, reduce service disruptions, and maintain continuity of care, while retaining reporting, invoicing, and compliance requirements.

