

AN ACT in relation to homeless persons.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act.

Section 5. Legislative intent. It is the long-standing policy of this State that no person should suffer unnecessarily from cold or hunger, be deprived of shelter or the basic rights incident to shelter, or be subject to unfair discrimination based on his or her homeless status. At the present time, many persons have been rendered homeless as a result of economic hardship, a severe shortage of safe and affordable housing, and a shrinking social safety net. It is the intent of this Act to lessen the adverse effects and conditions caused by the lack of residence or a home.

Section 10. Bill of Rights.

(a) No person's rights, privileges, or access to public services may be denied or abridged solely because he or she is homeless. Such a person shall be granted the same rights and privileges as any other citizen of this State. A person experiencing homelessness has the following rights:

- (1) the right to use and move freely in public spaces,

including but not limited to public sidewalks, public parks, public transportation, and public buildings, in the same manner as any other person and without discrimination on the basis of his or her housing status;

(2) the right to equal treatment by all State and municipal agencies, without discrimination on the basis of housing status;

(3) the right not to face discrimination while maintaining employment due to his or her lack of permanent mailing address, or his or her mailing address being that of a shelter or social service provider;

(4) the right to emergency medical care free from discrimination based on his or her housing status;

(5) the right to vote, register to vote, and receive documentation necessary to prove identity for voting without discrimination due to his or her housing status;

(6) the right to protection from disclosure of his or her records and information provided to homeless shelters and service providers to State, municipal, and private entities without appropriate legal authority; and the right to confidentiality of personal records and information in accordance with all limitations on disclosure established by the federal Homeless Management Information Systems, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and the federal Violence Against Women Act; and

(7) the right to a reasonable expectation of privacy in his or her personal property to the same extent as personal property in a permanent residence.

(b) As used in this Act, "housing status" means the status of having or not having a fixed or regular residence, including the status of living on the streets, in a shelter, or in a temporary residence.

Section 15. Damages and attorney's fees. In any civil action alleging a violation of this Act, the court may award appropriate injunctive and declaratory relief, actual damages, and reasonable attorney's fees and costs to a prevailing plaintiff.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.