



Public Health Committee  
Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Written testimony in regards to  
**H.B. No 6666 An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding  
Various Revisions To The Public Health Statutes**

**Chris Venable**  
**Homeless Youth Liaison**

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Anwar, Senator Kushner, Representative Gilchrest, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for considering my testimony in support of Sec. 70 Section 7-36 of H.B. No 6666 An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes

My name is Chris Venable and I am the Homeless Youth Liaison for Journey Home and a member of the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. Journey Home serves as a backbone agency to coordinate the efforts to end homelessness and support systems of homeless services and housing in the Capitol region, known as the Coordinated Access Networks. Journey Home's daily interactions with leadership, middle management, and front-line staff at partner agencies that provide emergency shelter, outreach, youth navigation, and housing gives us a unique lens to help identify gaps in our system and implement solutions. For youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, access to and obtaining legal identification documents is one such gap and a critical barrier that stands in the way of overcoming homelessness and achieving self-sufficiency. I am advocating for H.B. No 6666 on behalf of the youth and young adults who experience homelessness in the Capitol Region of Connecticut every year.

**The revisions in Sec. 70 Section 7-36 will allow youth aged 15-24 experiencing homelessness, as verified by their school or a provider, to obtain a copy of their birth certificate and a state ID for free. The revision also specifies a definition of homelessness consistent with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.**

Currently, state law allows a fee waiver for individuals who are residents of a homeless shelter or other facility for homeless persons (CGS sec. 1-1h). However, many youth and young adults experiencing homelessness do not stay in a shelter. Accessing a State ID Card is just as critical for these youth experiencing homelessness as those who are in shelters. Without an ID, youth have difficulty accessing services and engaging in activities that will help improve their situation such as obtaining employment, housing, and accessing other benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued support in ensuring instances of youth homelessness in CT is rare, brief, and one-time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Venable", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Venable  
Homeless Youth Liaison

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