



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

Dear Chairman Kapenga and members,

Thank you for the opportunity to come before your committee today to discuss Senate Bill 145.

As many of you know, homelessness affects thousands of individuals across our state, and is present in communities both big and small. This legislation is part of a package of bills drawn from the state action plan put forward by the Interagency Council on Homelessness, and is intended to combat homelessness in all corners Wisconsin.

SB 145 will direct the state to double the funding to shelter facilities for case management services for homeless families. It will direct the Department of Children and Families to increase funding from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 in each fiscal year which they can request through a 13.10 from the Joint Committee on Finance with the new amendment.

This common sense legislation is needed because providing case management has shown to improve housing outcomes, mental health and overall quality of life. It also decreases an individual's abuse of drugs and alcohol which decreases the cost by first responders and law enforcement.

At the end of the day, I am authoring this bill because I believe it can help not just my community but the entire state of Wisconsin. The goal is that by increasing the funding for this grant program, we can achieve a decrease in the length of time a person is homeless, decrease the return to homelessness and increase the total income for an individual. I hope you can see we are not just throwing money at a problem but using consensus driven research and successful programming to help individuals struggling with homelessness.

Chairman Kapenga, again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the committee on this important legislation. At this time, I'd be happy to answer any questions you or the members of the committee may have.



Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

TO: Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations

FROM: Senator Luther Olsen

DATE: Tuesday, September 10, 2019

SUBJECT: Testimony for Senate Bill 145/Assembly Bill 120

Thank you Chairman Kapenga and members of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations for holding a hearing and allowing me to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 145 (SB 145) and Assembly Bill 120 (AB 120).

This bill was drafted as part of a package that was drawn from the recommendations included in *A Hand and Home: Foundations for Success*, the 2019-2022 state action plan from the Interagency Council on Homelessness. The idea for this legislation came directly from recommendation strategy 2.2.

Under strategy 2.2 it was suggested that we increase funding for the Wisconsin Homeless Case Management Services (HCMS) Grant Program. The HCMS grant program was created in the 2017-19 state budget. This grant program gives funds to provide case management services to people living in emergency shelters. These services that are provided include financial management, services to ensure that children remain enrolled in school as well as attend, as well as several employment related services.

This grant program helps shelters get people the help they need to get back on their feet and back into permanent housing. This is an important piece of legislation to help address homelessness; as providing case management services has been shown to help improve housing outcomes, mental health, and overall quality of life.

Again, thank you Chairman Kapenga and members of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations for holding a hearing today. I ask for your support on SB 145 and AB 120.