

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to homelessness; providing a short
 3 title; amending s. 420.621, F.S.; defining the term
 4 "housing status"; creating s. 420.6215, F.S.;
 5 providing legislative findings; prohibiting the denial
 6 or abridgment of a person's ability to access public
 7 services solely because he or she is homeless;
 8 providing that a person experiencing homelessness has
 9 specified rights; authorizing a court to award certain
 10 relief, damages, and attorney fees and costs to a
 11 prevailing plaintiff in certain civil actions;
 12 providing an effective date.

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 14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 16 **Section 1.** This act may be cited as the "Homeless Persons
 17 Dignity Act."

18 **Section 2.** **Present subsections (6) and (7) of section**
 19 **420.621, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (7)**
 20 **and (8), respectively, and a new subsection (6) is added to that**
 21 **section, to read:**

22 420.621 Definitions.—As used in ss. 420.621-420.628, the
 23 term:

24 (6) "Housing status" means the actual or perceived status
 25 of having, not having, or being at risk of not having a fixed,

26 regular, or adequate nighttime residence. For purposes of this
27 subsection, the phrase "not having a fixed, regular, or adequate
28 nighttime residence" includes living in a primary nighttime
29 residence that is a public or private place not designed for or
30 ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for a person
31 or living in a shelter designated to provide temporary living
32 arrangements.

33 **Section 3. Section 420.6215, Florida Statutes, is created**
34 **to read:**

35 420.6215 Homeless Persons Dignity Act.—

36 (1) The Legislature finds that:

37 (a) No individual should suffer unnecessarily from cold,
38 extreme heat, or hunger, be deprived of shelter, or be deprived
39 of basic rights due to the lack of shelter.

40 (b) Many individuals have become homeless as a result of
41 fleeing domestic violence, exiting foster care, experiencing a
42 natural disaster, or facing an ongoing shortage of safe and
43 affordable housing.

44 (c) Persons 13 to 23 years of age are particularly likely
45 to suffer from deprivation of basic rights due to actual or
46 perceived homelessness.

47 (2) A person's ability to access public services may not
48 be denied or abridged solely because he or she is homeless. A
49 person experiencing homelessness must be provided the same
50 access to public services as any other resident of this state.

51 (3) A person experiencing homelessness has the right:

52 (a) To move freely in and use spaces ordinarily open to
53 the public, including, but not limited to, public sidewalks,
54 public transportation, public restrooms, and public buildings,
55 without discrimination on the basis of housing status.

56 (b) To access safe and clean drinking water, public
57 handwashing facilities, and public electricity sources without
58 discrimination on the basis of housing status.

59 (c) To the Housing First approach to homelessness as
60 provided in s. 420.6275.

61 (d) To not be subject to civil or criminal penalties for
62 standing, walking, or temporarily sleeping or resting in a
63 public place or vehicle in a nonobstructive manner, with or
64 without tents, sleeping bags, additional clothing, or other
65 supplies intended to make sleep comfortable and possible.

66 (e) To engage in lawful self-employment, including, but
67 not limited to, the right to seek self-employment in junk
68 removal and recycling that requires the collection, possession,
69 storage, and redemption of goods for reuse and recycling,
70 without being subject to harassment, arrest, or civil or
71 criminal penalties.

72 (f) To pray, meditate, or practice religion in public
73 spaces without being subject to harassment, arrest, or civil or
74 criminal penalties.

75 (g) To equal treatment by all state and local governmental

76 entities without discrimination on the basis of housing status,
77 including access to 24-hour and disaster emergency shelters,
78 transitional housing, social services, public housing, public
79 facilities such as libraries, and voucher or other similar
80 programs.

81 (h) To Internet access and technology that enables
82 Internet access.

83 (i) To freedom from discrimination in employment,
84 education, housing, or public accommodations due to a person's
85 actual or perceived homelessness, which can include, but is not
86 limited to, lack of a permanent mailing address or using a
87 shelter's or social service provider's mailing address.

88 (j) To have emergency medical care provided without
89 discrimination on the basis of housing status.

90 (k) For eligible citizens who are homeless, to vote,
91 register to vote, and receive any identification documentation
92 necessary to vote without discrimination on the basis of housing
93 status.

94 (l) To the confidentiality and protection from public
95 disclosure of all personally identifiable information in
96 accordance with the federal homeless management information
97 system, the federal Health Insurance Portability and
98 Accountability Act of 1996, and the federal Violence Against
99 Women Act of 1994.

100 (4) In any civil action alleging a violation of this

101 | section, the court may award appropriate injunctive and
102 | declaratory relief, actual damages, and reasonable attorney fees
103 | and costs to a prevailing plaintiff.

104 | **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.