

House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee

Prepared by the Utah Association of Special Districts

3/2/2026

Bill: 1st substitute HB 596 – Homelessness Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Eliason

Floor Sponsor: Senator Cullimore

UASD Position: Track

This Bill addresses provisions regarding homeless services.

Discussion: The 1st substitute and House Amendment 1 were adopted by the Committee. The sponsor explained that current overflow funding for homelessness services is scheduled to expire on April 30. The Bill extends and modifies funding and programmatic tools intended to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in transitioning back into the community. The Bill includes a one-year flexibility provision for shelters serving single men and single women, which is typically utilized during winter overflow operations. The Bill also establishes a working group to evaluate the existing mitigation funding formula and consider potential changes. Additional provisions address winter overflow facilities by transferring state ownership of an existing overflow building and appropriating capital funding for remodeling and improvements. The Bill makes technical changes, including renaming advisory boards associated with sheltering cities. It also modifies the temperature thresholds for Code Blue emergency shelter activation and creates a Code Red emergency shelter provision applicable to the City of St. George when temperatures reach 105 degrees or higher. The Bill further establishes a State Homeless Trust Fund.

Representative Whyte asked about lines 995 through 998 of House Amendment 1. The Utah League of Cities and Towns explained that those provisions remove accelerator funding mechanisms for the mitigation fund beginning in 2027. Representative Strong asked whether the 1st substitute altered the fiscal note. The sponsor responded that changes made in the substitute eliminate the Department of Health and Human Services fiscal note associated with the Code Red provision.

The Utah Behavioral Health Commission, the Office of Homeless Services, the Mayor of South Salt Lake, the City of St. George, Shelter the Homeless, Unsheltered Utah, the Road Home Homeless Shelter, and the Utah Homeless Services Board spoke in support of the Bill. Representative Hall questioned the remaining fiscal note associated with the substitute. The sponsor responded that ongoing negotiations are intended to reduce the fiscal note to zero.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 596, as amended, passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.
