



Rhode Island State Council of Churches and the Rhode Island Bible Society

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January 3rd, 2025

The Honorable Daniel McKee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St. Providence, RI

re: Homelessness public health crisis

Dear Governor McKee:

On behalf of the Governing Board and the Executive Minister, the Rhode Island State Council of Churches expresses its concern regarding misleading information on the status of homelessness in Rhode Island.

At the recent **2024 State of Homelessness** event, we learned that:

- Homelessness increased by nearly **35%** in 2024
- Additional beds **have not** offset the growing need
- There are **640+** unsheltered people waiting for shelter, but there are only an average of **seven** openings a day
- **Low wages and high rents** continue to drive families into poverty and homelessness

We are told that the greatest commandment is to, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and that the second is like it, “to love your neighbor as yourself.”

Across Rhode Island, service providers and communities of faith are feeding, clothing, and housing our most vulnerable – and they are overwhelmed.

It does not have to be this way.

We ask Governor McKee **to declare homelessness a public health crisis** and to **instruct the Department of Housing to release long-overdue contract payments** so that service providers can release shelter beds and open warming centers.

While these measures do not address the systemic realities that create poverty, they are urgently needed to save lives.

“Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” To take God seriously is to take God’s concerns seriously.

We urge immediate action in defense of the most vulnerable among us.

Jeremy M. Langill
Executive Minister
Rhode Island State Council of Churches