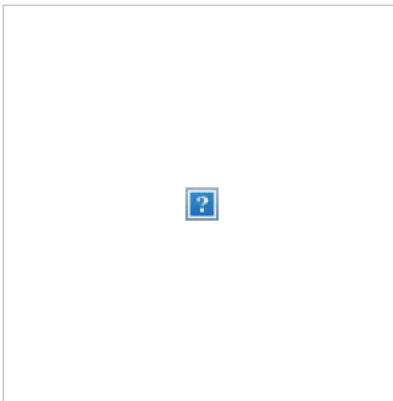


**From:** [Homeless Services Network](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [External]CALL TO ACTION: HB-437 "Drug-Free Homeless Service Zones"  
**Date:** Thursday, April 10, 2025 9:20:55 AM

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## **CALL TO ACTION: Oppose or Amend [HB-437](#) 'Establish Drug-Free Homeless Service Zones'**

Good morning fellow service providers,

We are here to alert you of a concerning bill sweeping through our NC House of Representatives very quickly. The North Carolina House of Representatives is the state-level legislative body that makes laws for North Carolina. Yesterday late afternoon [HB-437](#) was added to the Rules committee and was pushed through with little deliberation. The bill has now been sent to the House floor for vote and debate. The House reconvenes on [Today 4/10/25 at 11:00am](#) and since the agenda is only posted shortly prior, debate and vote on HB-437 could begin as early as today.

If you wish to contact your NC-House Representatives the emails and phone numbers will be at the end.

You can find the original HB-437 [here](#):  
You can find the amended HB-437 [here](#):

### **HB-437: 'Establish Drug-Free Homeless Service Zones'**

#### **What does this Bill intend to do?**

Establish Drug-Free Homeless Service Zones within 100 feet of all homeless service facilities that receive state, local, or federal funding including shelters, housing programs, and other facilities that serve primarily homeless individuals

"Any operator of a facility-based service who **intentionally** allows a person to commit an offense under [G.S. 90-95\(a\)\(1\)](#) in a drug-free homeless service zone is **guilty of a Class H felony**"

Raise the penalty for individuals that are caught selling, delivering, or manufacturing controlled substances from a Class G Felony to a Class E Felony if sale occurred within

100 feet of a drug-free homeless service zone

Require signage to declare areas as drug-free homeless service zones and the "the presence of this sign shall raise a presumption that the person committing the offense knows or reasonably should know that it is a drug-free homeless service zone."

### **HSN's Key Concerns with HB-437**

The Homeless Services Network (HSN) has identified the following concerns regarding [HB-437](#), which we believe would harm, rather than help, efforts to serve our neighbors:

#### **(1) Felony Charges for Service Providers**

Under this bill, operators—homeless service providers—could face a Class H felony if found to have *intentionally* allowed a violation of G.S. 90-95(a)(1) to occur.

Criminalizing providers for the actions of others, especially under vague standards, is both unjust and counterproductive. We strongly urge removal of the felony penalty provision.

#### **(2) Undefined Legal Language: "Intentionally"**

The bill leaves the term "intentionally" undefined, giving law enforcement broad discretion to interpret its meaning.

Other terms, such as "operator" and "facility-based service," are clearly defined in the bill. For consistency and clarity, "intentionally" must also be clearly defined to avoid misinterpretation or misuse.

#### **(3) Misuse of Presumptions Based on Signage**

The bill mandates drug-free signage, and states that a sign alone creates a "presumption that the person committing the offense knows or reasonably should know that it is a drug-free homeless service zone."

We are concerned this presumption could be used to unfairly claim that service providers intentionally allowed illegal activity—simply by being present on-site, even if they had no knowledge of or involvement in the act. Defining intentionally will provide legal clarification and protection for hard-working, compassionate, and honest homeless service providers

#### **(4) Safety Risks and Misapplied Liability**

We share deep concern about drug activity targeting neighbors. However, confronting suspected dealers may be dangerous or even life-threatening for staff.

This bill could place frontline workers in harm's way by holding them legally liable for circumstances beyond their control.

If the criminal implications for service providers was removed, the 300 feet perimeter could be more effective in curbing predatory drug dealers targeting homeless individuals that are susceptible to the 'buying on credit' traps; however, service providers are not police and should not be expected to be ominously aware 100 feet is more appropriate in that instance. Known drug dealers are frequently banned from service properties; however, they will loiter close by which may or may not fall in the wider 300 feet parameter.

#### **(5) Cicero Institute: Outsider Influence on State Policy**

In HB-437, 5 out of 7 sections are either verbatim or semantically identical to the [Cicero Institute 'model' bill](#).

The Cicero Institute is a Texas-based Think-Tank founded by billionaire tech entrepreneur Joe Lonsdale, co-founder of Palantir Technologies alongside Peter Thiel (who also post-merger co-founded PayPal with Elon Musk). Similar bills have popped up

around the country utilizing model legislations posted on the Cicero Institutes website. Cicero promotes "model" or "copy & paste" legislation in state government's across the country— often pushing bills that criminalize unauthorized street camping through fines and jail time

Legislation affecting North Carolina's most vulnerable residents should be written by and for North Carolinians—not copy & pasted from think tanks

#### **(6) Disproportionate Penalties Compared to Other Professions**

While other professions, such as physicians, have reporting requirements under NC law (NC G.S. 90-21.20) for reporting patients with suspected crime-related injuries i.e. gunshot wounds, they are NOT subject to criminal charges for failing to report to police.

This bill singles out homeless service providers for criminal penalties, setting a dangerous and unjust precedent.

#### **(7) Homelessness Requires Local Solutions, Not One-Size-Fits-All Models**

Homelessness is complex, and solutions must reflect the lived experiences, needs, and insights of our communities.

Our NC lawmakers should draft policy from the heart and the ground up—drawing on real relationships with constituents and NC-based leaders—not importing templated answers that ignore local context.

If you share our concerns please reach out to your NC House Representatives. We have added the current Mecklenburg County NC-House representatives and their emails here along with their legislative assistants. You can copy and paste this short listserv into your 'to' box if you choose to email:

[Jordan.Lopez@ncleg.gov](mailto:Jordan.Lopez@ncleg.gov), [Kayla.Cornett@ncleg.gov](mailto:Kayla.Cornett@ncleg.gov), [Beth.Helfrich@ncleg.gov](mailto:Beth.Helfrich@ncleg.gov), [Valentina.Silardi@ncleg.gov](mailto:Valentina.Silardi@ncleg.gov), [Nasif.Majeed@ncleg.gov](mailto:Nasif.Majeed@ncleg.gov), [Beverlee.Baker@ncleg.gov](mailto:Beverlee.Baker@ncleg.gov), [Julia.Greenfield@ncleg.gov](mailto:Julia.Greenfield@ncleg.gov), [Carolyn.Logan@ncleg.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Logan@ncleg.gov), [Becky.Carney@ncleg.gov](mailto:Becky.Carney@ncleg.gov), [Beth.LeGrande@ncleg.gov](mailto:Beth.LeGrande@ncleg.gov), [Laura.Budd@ncleg.gov](mailto:Laura.Budd@ncleg.gov), [Brandon.Lofton@ncleg.gov](mailto:Brandon.Lofton@ncleg.gov), [Katherine.Kirby@ncleg.gov](mailto:Katherine.Kirby@ncleg.gov), [Tricia.Coatham@ncleg.gov](mailto:Tricia.Coatham@ncleg.gov), [Jacob.Shirley@ncleg.gov](mailto:Jacob.Shirley@ncleg.gov), [Carla.Cunningham@ncleg.gov](mailto:Carla.Cunningham@ncleg.gov), [Sherrie.Burnette@ncleg.gov](mailto:Sherrie.Burnette@ncleg.gov), [Aisha.Dew@ncleg.gov](mailto:Aisha.Dew@ncleg.gov), [Ann.Raeford@ncleg.gov](mailto:Ann.Raeford@ncleg.gov), [Mary.Belk@ncleg.gov](mailto:Mary.Belk@ncleg.gov), [Ralph.Belk@ncleg.gov](mailto:Ralph.Belk@ncleg.gov), [Terry.Brown@ncleg.gov](mailto:Terry.Brown@ncleg.gov), [Ashley.Luyindu@ncleg.gov](mailto:Ashley.Luyindu@ncleg.gov)

If you prefer calling over emailing or have the bandwidth for both:

Jordan Lopez – (919) 733-5749 | Beth Helfrich – (919) 733-5828  
Nasif Majeed – (704) 965-1153 | Julia Greenfield – (919) 715-0706  
Carolyn Logan – (919) 715-2530 | Becky Carney – (919) 733-5827  
Laura Budd – (919) 733-5827 | Brandon Lofton – (919) 715-3009  
Tricia Coatham – (919) 733-5886 | Aisha Dew – (704) 509-2939  
Mary Belk – (980) 579-2800 | Terry Brown – (919) 733-5654

[Click here](#) to find your specific NC House legislator based off your address

- Just this morning another bill was added to be discussed next Tuesday and pushed through that will restrict SNAP for those sleeping outside, more info coming soon, [HB-640](#)
- You can find other model bills [here](#) by the Cicero Institute; these have been used for another bill we will be sending out key information soon about another even more concerning bill, [HB-781](#), which would ban sleeping out and has not yet been calendared but will be soon
- You can find the similar Homeless Zone Cicero Institute model bill [here](#):
- You can read an article by Invisible People on the Cicero Institute [here](#):

**Keep being a lighthouse for others! Keep rising and uplifting! Use your voice to light the way!**

Homeless Services Network of Charlotte-Mecklenburg | [hsncharlotte.com](https://hsncharlotte.com)

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