



January 23, 2025

Hon. Kenneth Weyler, Chair
Finance Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

***Re: HB 519 – An Act Making an Appropriation to DHHS to Fund & Support the
Waypoint Youth & Young Adult Shelter***

Dear Chair Weyler and the Committee,

I write in strong support of HB 519, on a winter morning when it is 11 degrees outside and overnight lows have been below zero.

The Children's Law Center of New Hampshire is a legal services nonprofit which provides interdisciplinary representation to at-risk children in CHINS, delinquency, child protection, education, and related matters. We also advocate for systemic reform through policy advocacy, education, and training.

Waypoint's Manchester shelter is the only emergency shelter in New Hampshire designed specifically for young adults aged 18-24 experiencing homelessness. My understanding is that since its opening in October 2022, the shelter has operated at full capacity, with its 14 beds consistently filled. Seven of these beds are reserved for longer-term stays to support young adults pursuing education or employment, while the remaining seven are allocated nightly through a lottery system. As it is, demand for beds exceeds Waypoint's current capacity.

A December 2024 report by the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness found that New Hampshire experienced the highest percentage increase in homelessness in the nation, with a 52.1% increase in 2023. It found that young people under the age of 25 represented over a quarter of those experiencing homelessness during New Hampshire's 2023 Point in Time Count. Early intervention through programs like Waypoint's is essential not only for reducing chronic homelessness but also for saving public funds in the long run.

I urge you to pass this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

// L. Wolford

Lisa Wolford
Executive Director

Children's Law Center of New Hampshire

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