

INSERT LETTERHEAD

## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

### Homeless Protection Act

A.1565 (Rosenthal)/S.5816 (Sepúlveda)

[ORGANIZATION NAME] strongly supports A.1565 (Rosenthal)/S.5816 (Sepúlveda), which establishes the Homeless Protection Act to amend subdivisions 1, 2, and 4 of section 485.05 of the penal law, classifying certain offenses against individuals experiencing, or perceived to be experiencing, homelessness as hate crimes, and to amend paragraph (a) of subdivision 4-c of section 837 of the executive law, as amended by chapter 118 of the laws of 2022, to ensure data reporting on such hate crimes.

#### DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION HERE – WHO YOU SERVE, WHERE YOU ARE LOCATED.

The Homeless Protection Act would bolster legal protections for individuals experiencing homelessness by expressly categorizing bias-motivated offenses against them as hate crimes. Conceivably this protection would serve as a deterrent to such acts of violence. Furthermore, the legislation mandates the enhancement of data collection mechanisms to document bias-motivated crimes to understand the true extent of the issue. Currently, there is no formal documentation process available in New York. This data is indispensable for informing policy decisions and allocating resources effectively to address and prevent such incidents.

Most notably, The Homeless Protection Act carries substantial weight in combating the stigma surrounding homelessness. It is much more likely that a person experiencing homelessness be a victim of a violent crime rather than the perpetrator of an attack. By codifying into law the recognition of violence against this vulnerable group as a hate crime, the legislation sends an unequivocal message that the rights of people experiencing homelessness are to be upheld and protected. Advocates with firsthand experience strongly endorse this legislation and emphasize its urgency. Upholding the fundamental civil rights of people experiencing homelessness is critical, and this bill represents a significant step in that direction at a time when there is an increase in criminalization of homelessness across the country.

[INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE *IMPACT OF STIGMA AND/OR VIOLENCE* ON THE UNSTABLY HOUSED INDIVIDUALS THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION SERVES/ WORKS WITH.]

[SHARE ANY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE *IMPACT THIS LEGISLATION WILL HAVE* ON THOSE YOU SERVE, OR YOUR ORGANIZATION.]

**INSERT LETTERHEAD**

**[ORGANIZATION NAME]** strongly urges the New York State Legislature to pass A.1565(Rosenthal)/S.5816 (Sepúlveda) – the Homeless Protection Act. Its passage would not only provide crucial legal safeguards but also demonstrate New York's commitment to upholding justice and dignity for all its residents, regardless of housing status.

For questions, please contact **[NAME, TITLE, and EMAIL.]**