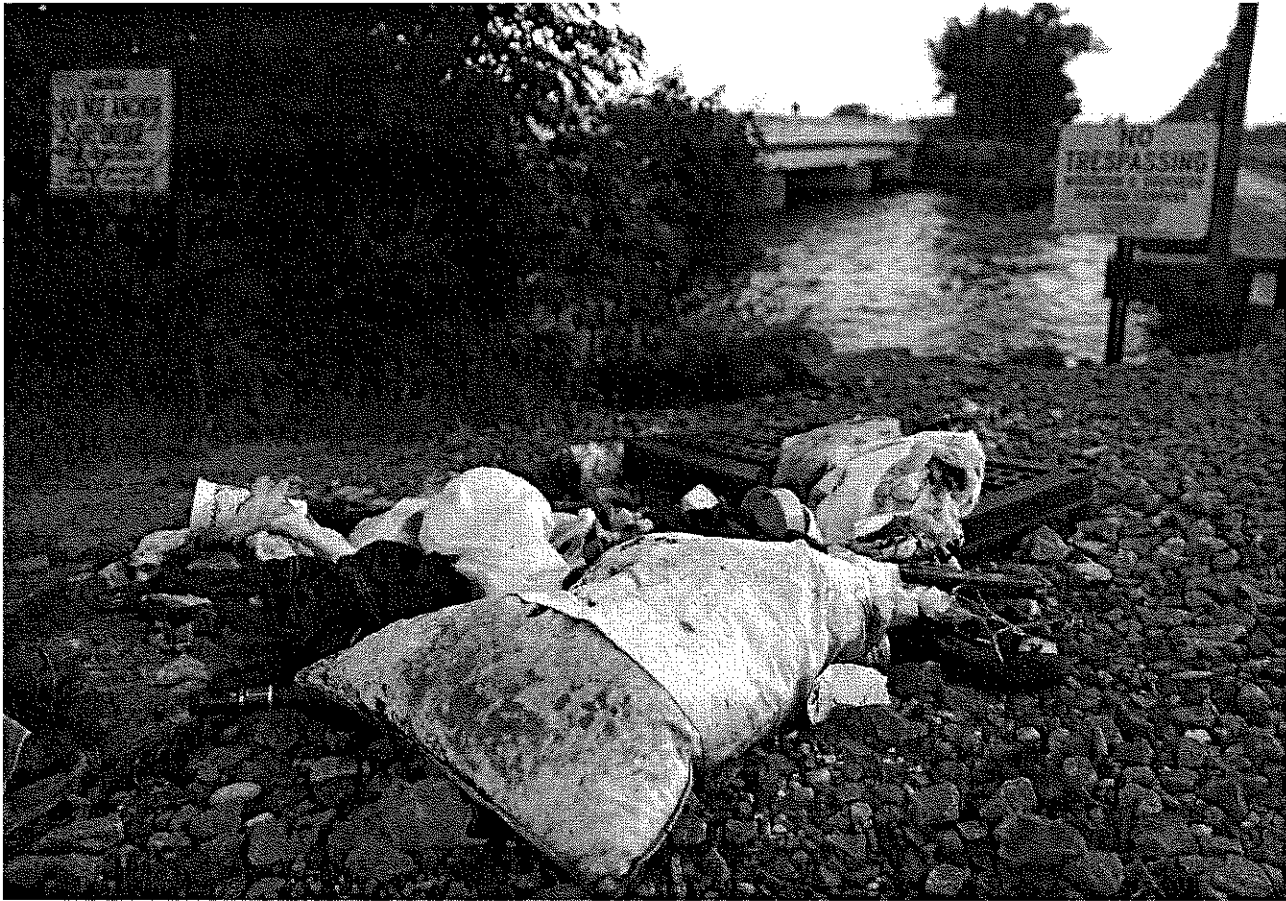


http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/gop-homelessness-bills-pass-legislature-s-finance-committee/article_420c12d3-968b-536a-9580-4b9f270cae89.html

GOP homelessness bills pass Legislature's finance committee

DEAN MOSIMAN dmosiman@madison.com Apr 24, 2017



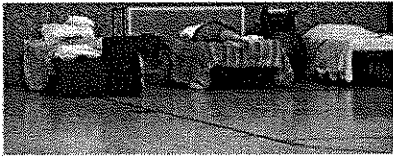
M.P. KING, STATE JOURNAL

A pillow, clothing and other personal effects are left near railroad tracks along Monona Bay, one of numerous sites in Madison where homeless people occasionally sleep. The state Legislature's Joint Finance Committee on Monday unanimously approved two GOP-sponsored bills intended to address homelessness.

More information



The state Legislature's Joint Finance Committee on Monday unanimously approved two bills that are part of a



State Assembly committee passes package of GOP bills to address homelessness

Speakers support GOP homelessness bills at hearing

State Democratic lawmakers cool to GOP proposals to address homelessness

GOP lawmakers offer legislation to address homelessness, including key council

The way home: Without change, suffering will continue for thousands of homeless

GOP-sponsored package intended to address homelessness.

The two bills — one creating an Interagency Council on Homelessness and the other a pilot grant program for a municipality to connect homeless people with jobs and training — came before the committee because they include new, modest funding. The other bills require no new appropriations.

On April 12, Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna, and others unveiled the legislative package that would provide new structure to state efforts to reduce and end homelessness, adjust some current programs and test new approaches.

The centerpiece Interagency Council, to be chaired by the governor's designee — the first to be Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch — would contain the secretaries of eight agencies and others. The bill designates a new director of the council in the Department of Administration, with compensation up to \$95,000 for the position.

The other bill approved Monday would create a grant program for a municipality to get \$75,000 annually to pilot a program for two years that connects homeless people to jobs and workforce training. The grant would require a match of at least \$50,000 from the participating city.

“It is clear that the Legislature understands the need for developing and supporting effective strategies addressing homelessness,” Steineke said after the votes. “As shown by the testimony we heard from a broad swath of industry professionals and advocates, establishing an interagency council to bring everyone to the table is crucial for creating lasting and meaningful change to the way we combat

homelessness in Wisconsin.”

The other bills would:

- Give the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority the ability to pilot a program to prioritize chronically homeless people on the waiting list — now about about 4,900 — for federal Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Free up underused, previously allocated state money — about \$300,000 — for transitional housing, to be used for additional types of housing models, and free separate homelessness prevention funds to be used where there is the greatest need statewide.

The Assembly Committee on Public Benefit Reforms overwhelmingly approved all four bills last week.

State Democratic lawmakers have given the package a mixed but largely cool response, saying the proposals don't do enough to deliver needed housing, social services and eviction prevention.

The legislation will come before the Assembly Rules committee on Thursday, with consideration by the full Assembly expected in May.

“It is clear that the Legislature understands the need for developing and supporting effective strategies addressing homelessness.” **Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna**

Dean Mosiman | Wisconsin State Journal

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

You May Like

Sponsored by Revcontent 