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TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK

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Testimony in support of: House Bill 1431: Relating to statewide participation in a homeless management information system by service providers to the homeless.

Submitted by:
Texas Homeless Network
Eric Samuels
3000 South IH-35; Suite 100
Austin, TX 78704

Chairman Cortez, and members of the Committee,

I wish to register our support for House Bill 1431. THN supports this bill because expanding access and use of homeless management information systems (HMIS) across Texas will provide homeless response systems with the data they need to serve people at risk or experience homelessness more efficiently. These data are invaluable to creating strategic plans to end homelessness and expand coordination with other systems of care to eliminate gaps and service and housing. Furthermore, it will strengthen efforts to connect the entire state of Texas via electronic data sharing through the use of the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN), which compiles and deduplicates these data on a state level.

THN has secured THDSN participation from four homeless response systems covering 89% of TX counties. Despite that, many shelters, housing, and supportive service providers still do not utilize an HMIS. If there is greater participation, the benefit for our vulnerable individuals, households, and those assisting them so they may exit homelessness will increase. However, the work to expand participation in HMIS and better collaboration as outlined in this bill is varied and time-consuming. So, we advise adding a budget sufficient to employ a full-time staff member over the biennium to oversee this work.

THN supports HB 1431 because data drives strategy to end homelessness and expands access to the opportunities needed for Texans to exit homelessness.
Sincerely,

Eric Samuels
President/CEO
Texas Homeless Network