

February 4, 2024

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TESTIMONY ON HB0093 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Housing and Community Development – Homeless Shelter Certification Program
– Establishment**

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Tahir Ravini

My name is Tahir Ravini. I am a resident of District 45. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0093 for the establishment of the Housing Shelter Certification Program.

I used to live at Weinberg Housing Resource Center for about a year and a half in 2018 and 2019. I was brought there through the Convalescent Care program, which has since been shut down. While I stayed there, these are some of daily indignities I experienced:

- Many residents experience mental health crises and were not getting the help they needed with either mental health treatment or housing.
- The food was not nutritious and did not offer you healthy choices - we didn't have fresh fruit or vegetable options. All food had sugar in it so it was not conducive to folks with diabetes. This is food we could process as kids, but not healthy for us as adults. Some shelters would bring in partners to serve meals, but others do not allow it.
- The grievance system was mismanaged. Depending on who managed your grievance, your experience would vary widely. Many people felt like they were being retaliated against and kicked out for speaking up.
- Staff were not properly trained in mental health care or support. There were many instances of fights and improper conduct of staff.

While I was at the shelter for just a year and a half, 21 people passed away. This is unconscionable. People are going through the worst time in their lives when experiencing homelessness, and the least they deserve is housing with dignity. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0093.**