

WHEREAS, Although Maryland is one of the wealthiest states, ranking 6th in per capita income, its public assistance payments rank only 27th in the nation; and

WHEREAS, A shortage of low-cost housing has been documented in every jurisdiction in Maryland, and waiting lists for Section 8 and subsidized housing are discouragingly long; and

WHEREAS, Approximately one-fifth of homeless persons receiving shelter in FY85 had been deinstitutionalized from a variety of facilities (mental hospital, general hospitals, nursing homes, prisons) without a plan to provide them with transitional housing or support services; and

WHEREAS, The 1984 General Assembly initiated legislation (HB 1415) to establish a State homeless service program -- The Shelter, Nutrition and Service Program for Homeless Individuals in Maryland. Funds for the program, administered by the Department of Human Resources, were acquired from State General Funds and the bill provided \$480,000 in FY85 and \$502,000 in FY86 to expand and plan for services for the homeless; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article 88A - Social Services Administration

132.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) (1) "Homeless individual" means an individual who:

(i) Is in need of housing or emergency shelter and proper nutrition;

(ii) Cannot be placed immediately in other available housing, nutrition, and service programs; and

(iii) Is a resident of the State at the time the application for housing is made.

(2) "Shelter, nutrition, and service program" means facilities or programs that offer and provide services of food or shelter and may include linkage to multiple service components, centralized decision making regarding placement, case management, transportation, and follow-up services for homeless individuals.

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