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Increased Homelessness Inevitable with New Housing & Tenancies (Misc.) Bill 2026

With limited parliamentary scrutiny, the new Housing & Tenancies (Misc.) Bill 2026 is set to be legislated before the summer break in the Dáil. As this Bill currently stands, the resulting increase in homelessness will be masked by smaller numbers of individuals and families in emergency accommodation and on the social housing list through a means of disqualification, obscuring actual housing need.

Dr. Alexia O'Brien, Housing Policy Advocate at the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice says: "I am deeply concerned about the inevitable increase of those entering homelessness as a result of this new Bill passing."

She continues, "The change in habitual residency requirements for the whole household is a grave worry and its impact on households' ability to receive and access social housing and emergency accommodation. As it currently stands, only one member of the household needs to prove habitual residency, whereas with this new Bill, all members of the household (excluding children) will need to be able to prove this. Proving habitual residency is a labour-intensive process for the household and the decision is left at the discretion of the housing officer, meaning the room for error and/or discrimination increases significantly."

She further warns that, regarding the new provision to access of night-to-night accommodation, "The introduction of a two-tiered system of emergency accommodation is inhumane and will lead to an increase in those rough sleeping, of which will most certainly include children. Furthermore, the fact that this is only offered for two nights, with no clear guidelines on what happens after the two nights, shows how little care the government are taking in helping our vulnerable members of society."

In addition, she states, "It is very problematic that this Bill would list tenants residing in a detached form of modular housing placed in the rear of a house as unavailing of tenancy rights on the basis that it is considered an extension of the home, and therefore, the renter is encompassed under the Rent-a-Room Scheme. As these units are detached from the main house, they operate as separate units and are therefore a separate type of tenancy. To withhold rights to these tenants is a significant undermining of tenancy rights as a whole, and becomes a slippery slope."

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About the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice is an agency of the Irish Jesuit Province, dedicated to undertaking social analysis and theological reflection in relation to issues of social justice, including housing and homelessness, penal policy, environmental justice, and economic ethics. Established in 1978 by a small group of Jesuits living and working in Ballymun, on the northside of Dublin city, the Centre was intended to promote social justice and critically examine issues of structural injustice and poverty.