

DIEGO TOMAS ARENE-MORLEY, LICSW

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Chair CASEY, Esteemed members of the Municipal Government & Housing Committee:

I am writing to you as a clinical social worker and recovery coach with ten years of experience who has visited every single recovery house in the State of Rhode Island from Woonsocket to Narragansett.

I am writing in SUPPORT OF HB 8040, to treat recovery houses like any other family unit for two reasons: (1) It is already the law of the land! In 1995, Oxford recovery housing won a 6-3 decision before the US Supreme Court against the City of Edmonds, WA. The Court ruled that the Fair Housing Act protected over 5 unrelated individuals in recovery from substance use disorder who chose to live together in recovery in a single-family residence. The court deemed this arrangement as a “reasonable accommodation” to local zoning restrictions. Please review the case here for more specifics: *City of Edmonds v. Oxford House, Inc.*, 514 U.S. 725 (1995)

And (2) I know for a fact that these recovery houses save lives, contribute to the local economy and destigmatize the condition of addiction itself. Rhode Island has a highly functional recovery housing grant system (aka “942-STOP grant”) which supports individuals in recovery houses in early recovery. These houses are inspected regularly. I know because I used to do the inspections! There is already a lengthy wait to be placed in a house.

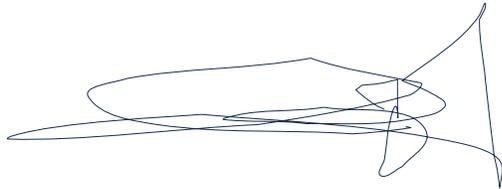
We need more recovery houses, not less and this law unambiguously signals to recovery housing operators that we as a State value their services. Every person in a recovery house is one less

homeless person, one less person in the Emergency Room, one more person working a job and stimulating the local economy and one more example for the broader community to see that recovery is possible. If we as a State or City/Town choose to push out those who have recovered from severe chronic illnesses, then why would we be surprised when our young people struggling with substance use never reach out for help? We need more recovery houses in RI, not less. They are an integral part of solving the housing crisis and the addiction crisis.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

DIEGO TOMAS ARENE-MORLEY, LICSW

3/16/2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Diego Tomas Arene-Morley', with a stylized, overlapping structure.