

To Chairperson Casey and members of the Committee:

Testimony in Support of H8040

My name is Linda Marzilli. I have been living a lifestyle of recovery since March of 2004. I have also worked in the recovery community since 2016. I am currently the Director of Timberline Recovery Homes, which operates 3 recovery homes.

Living in recovery is an honor. Working in recovery to help better the lives of others facing similar challenges is how I, and many other Certified Recovery Home operators, give back to the community that gave us a brand new life, a life worth living.

Unfortunately, recovery is consistently stigmatized when, in all actuality, the people who recognize they need to make significant changes in their lives should be applauded, not branded and labeled as less than.

I would like to read a short but hopefully impactful testimony from our residents:

Testimony from our residents: *While I was in active addiction, I was often unhoused/living in unsafe environments/and lacked a supportive network. This made creating a lifestyle of recovery incredibly difficult. Housing in our state is minimal, and not all environments are good for early recovery. This is why having accessible recovery housing in RI is a lifeline.*

After I completed treatment, I was able to access the 942-STOP grant and was referred to a certified Timberline recovery house.

This was the beginning of my recovery journey, and also where I built my recovery network. It took a little while to settle in, but once I did, I felt like I was home. We make family meals together, we watch movies, we paint, and do things like puzzles and diamond art work. Those of us who are interested care for a garden in the backyard, others share their love for knitting or crafting, etc. My favorite part of the day is waking up with a cup of coffee and sitting on the couch with other residents, having meaningful recovery conversations. For the first time, I feel safe and comfortable enough to let my guard down and heal.

Some of us have earned high school diplomas and college degrees, we've started good jobs, we reunite with family and friends, and we go to recovery meetings together. It is because of all this that I am building a better life for myself, and will be equipped with the necessary tools when I am ready to leave my recovery home and live independently. All I truly know is that I have been saved. It started with a safe space and a home address to call my own. Without those two components, my recovery would have never been possible.

And that I know is true, because I've tried to change my life many times before, but I could never sustain long-term recovery until I moved into a safe, supportive recovery home.

With all my heart and gratitude for what safe recovery housing has done in my life, and the life of so many around me, I ask that you protect us from laws that will threaten the existence of recovery housing.

Timberline Recovery Homes Residents

To say that our homes operate as a family is not an understatement. Our families are a family of choice, defined as:

A self-defined, intentional support network—often including friends, partners, mentors, or neighbors—that provides unconditional love, safety, and nurturing outside of, or in place of, biological or marital ties. These families are built on shared values, mutual respect, and emotional support, often serving as critical, resilient, and enduring support systems for individuals, particularly within the recovery and LGBTQ+ communities.

Demanding that owners install commercial fire systems in their houses is not fair, it is not equitable, and to be frank, it imposes an essence of discrimination against the recovery population. I have never heard of off-campus college rentals being held to the same measures, so why inflict that demand on people living as a family in a healthy, abstinence-based home environment?

if this bill does not pass, and discriminatory fire code/zoning persists, it will create a detrimental financial burden for homeowners and will surely result in existing homes closing, and limit the opening of new homes.

Residents will end up back on the streets, in dangerous living situations.

I truly doubt that is the intention of state fire marshals; however, that is the harsh reality of how this will all turn out.

All existing certified recovery homes operate under NARR (National Alliance of Recovery Residences) standards, we are monitored by RICares to ensure structurally safe homes and ethical recovery practices, and we are fully committed to providing safe homes for our residents.

Our strict safety standards include fully operating smoke detectors/carbon monoxide detectors, we have fully operating fire extinguishers, we have regularly scheduled furnace maintenance/inspections, and we do not light candles in the houses. We are aware, and we are prepared to keep our houses safe by taking the same precautionary measures that any other family would take.

So I ask you to weigh the facts, and vote to support House Bill 8040, by doing so you will be saving the future of certified recovery housing in RI

Linda Marzilli, Timberline Recovery Homes, Director