

## Testimony in Support of Legislation HB8040 Protecting Certified Recovery Housing

Good afternoon, Chairperson Casey and members of the committee,

My name is Penny Bellrose, Director of Sanctuary Recovery Residence. I want to express my strong support for this legislation that protects certified recovery houses, the operators who run them, and the residents who rely on them for a safe path toward recovery.

Recovery housing plays a critical role in supporting individuals rebuilding their lives after substance use disorder. These homes provide stable, supportive, and structured environments where residents can focus on maintaining sobriety, rebuilding relationships, and becoming productive members of their communities.

Unfortunately, recovery homes and the people who live in them often face discriminatory policies at the local level. These policies can include zoning barriers, unnecessary restrictions, or enforcement practices that unfairly target recovery residences. Such actions not only stigmatize people in recovery but also violate federal protections, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Federal Fair Housing Act, which recognize individuals in recovery from substance use disorder as a protected class.

This legislation is important because it reinforces that certified recovery houses must be treated fairly and in accordance with existing federal law, as well as state fire safety and zoning standards. By protecting certified recovery residences from discriminatory treatment, the bill ensures that operators who follow the rules and maintain safe housing can continue providing this vital service without fear of unjust barriers.

Equally important, this legislation protects residents who are working every day to rebuild their lives. Safe and stable housing is one of the most important factors in long-term recovery. When recovery homes are pushed out of communities through discriminatory practices, individuals are often left with few options, increasing the risk of relapse, homelessness, or worse.

This bill does not exempt recovery homes from safety standards or responsible operation. Instead, it simply ensures that certified recovery houses are held to fair, consistent rules and are not subjected to policies that contradict federal protections or undermine recovery efforts.

Supporting recovery housing means supporting public health, community stability, and second chances. By passing this legislation, you are helping ensure that individuals in recovery have access to safe housing and that the organizations supporting them can continue their mission without unjust discrimination.

I respectfully urge you to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.