

Good morning, Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Chris Shannon, and I am a person in long term recovery. I am speaking today on behalf of Oxford House and why I think bill HB277 should not be passed. I have lived in an Oxford House since April 7th of 2019, and I can honestly say that it has saved my life. Oxford House was founded in 1975 and the first houses in Virginia were opened in 1990. Oxford House is a model of self-run, self-supporting, recovery housing with over 3,000 houses in over 44 different states. In the state of Virginia alone there are 158 Oxford Houses and 1,302 beds for individuals suffering from substance use disorders. Not only has Oxford House been around since 1975 but we are the only recovery housing model to have been accepted by SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Practices and Programs. On another point not only has Oxford House been recognized by SAMHSA, but DePaul University published a study showing Oxford Houses to have an unparalleled abstinence rate of over 87.5% one year after admission among our members, regardless of length of stay. Oxford House has given me so much more than I ever imagined I would have when I was in the depths of my addiction. The difference between Oxford House and other recovery residences is the self-run, self-supporting model. It has taught me how to have a checking account, how to pay my bills on time, how to run a household and all that goes into it! In my opinion the fact that everyone in an Oxford House comes together to run the house has really set it apart from other recovery residences. It gives me a sense of belonging and accomplishment I have never experienced anywhere else. I know that at the end of the day I have a safe, sober place to come home to that is filled with people I trust and relate to on such a deep level because they too are winning the battle against addiction. If bill HB277 is passed it would rob myself and so many others the chance for Oxford House to become such a huge part of the recovery process and I can't even begin to imagine the effects this would have on the recovery community. Please vote NO to bill HB277 in order to keep Oxford House a certifying body and to continue to open self-run, self-supporting recovery residences.

Thank you,

Chris Shannon – Oxford House Brookland Park