

Testimony of Steven Kliot in support of H.R. NO 299

132nd General Assembly Regular Session 2017-2018 H.R 299

Madam Chair Anielski,

My name is Steven Kliot and I am a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. I have been clean & sober since November 17, 2015. I want to thank you for introducing House Resolution 299. As mentioned in the resolution, current efforts to combat the devastating opioid epidemic in Ohio are costing the state billions of dollars each year. Thousands of lives are being lost every year, and each year the numbers seem to grow. This year alone I have personally lost seven friends to addiction. The situation, while not entirely hopeless, is extremely dire.

There are currently many approaches to combating addiction. Most current treatment modalities view addiction as a disease—something to be treated in a clinical or psychological setting. While I agree with that assessment, I find it interesting that nearly every single court, drug treatment center, hospital, physician, social worker, and psychologist refer any and all addicts to a 12-step recovery program.

ALL 12-step recovery programs outline a course of action and a design for living that involves finding, surrendering to, and deriving strength from a relationship with a “power greater than oneself.”

So addiction is a disease of the mind and/or body, and the best that the medical field can come up with is to refer their patients for spiritual help?

I certainly agree that rehab facilities where newly-sober addicts can find strength and support within a therapeutic community are extremely important. But when the insurance runs out, and the clinicians all go home for the night, who is left to support the addicts? Who is there to answer late-night phone calls from a desperate individual who is trying with every fiber of their being to do the right thing—maybe for the first time in years? Who is there to support the addict’s family? Who officiates the funerals to comfort those left behind?

More often than not it is members of a faith-based community who field those calls. It is people who, at their lowest, have looked up desperately and found a faith that really works. It is people who are giving back what was given to them.

In my own personal journey to recovery, I have come to realize that no matter how many courses of treatment I underwent, how many times I was jailed or hospitalized,

my recovery was—at best—precarious until I found a home in a faith-based community in which I was able to grow and thrive. Because of faith-based organizations like Clean Start I have been able to not only improve my life, but also to pay back a debt to those who went before me, and to society by giving of my time and talent in an effort to help others find their path to a better way of life.

I thank you for recognizing in this resolution that faith based organizations, institutions, and communities, are both valuable and VITAL partners in Ohio's fight against opioid addiction and substance abuse of all types.

Thank you all so very much for your time, attention, and efforts toward battling this terrible affliction affecting so many Ohioans, their families, and our communities.

With Sincere Respect,

Steven J Kliot