

Madam Chair Anielski, Members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

My name is William Walter, a resident of Perry Township in Lake County. I am truly grateful and deeply appreciate the opportunity to present to you my personal testimony on behalf of the Northeast Ohio's Fight Against Addiction Committee.

It is my belief and my testimony that faith-based recovery is dynamic to the turn-around of the opioid epidemic, which is not only bringing destruction upon the people of our nation, but is devastating the state of Ohio.

My battle with drug addiction began approximately 14 years ago in the prime of my youth. The prescription of pain pills quickly transpired to the abuse of legal and illegal drugs. I, at first, believed that I was treating a physical symptom or surface problem. Now, in hindsight, I clearly see that I was trying to treat an emotional and spiritual sickness.

There were many times in which I was extended or forced into help through different avenues, such as, going to 12 in-patient and out-patient rehabilitation facilities, a 5-month Northeast Ohio Community Alternative Program sentence, a 10-month sentence in state prison, multiple county jail sentences, and I also experienced homelessness. Through all these attempts towards recovery, I thought I found a way of living and treating my addiction. The reality of the situation was, I never found true healing or successful recovery. One constant, one vital component, was missing from each platform that was designed to bring change in my life.

The "missing component" that I desire for you to see, is the need for faith-based recovery. Faith can be defined as the presence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen. I needed to know that in the midst of my addiction and brokenness, the presence of sobriety in my life would be attainable and achievable. This could not come from a 12 step program alone. I needed to find that through the power of God, I could overcome this oppressive lifestyle and the roots of my addiction. Recovery programs are positive and necessary, however, a recovery program centered on Christ has given me an unmasked healing. It has allowed me to find deliverance, hope, a restored future, healing into my past, and a meaningful present.

Thanks to faith-based recovery, I am now able to be a light in the midst of darkness. My trials serve a deeper purpose. I have witnessed to and assisted others in seeking faith-based services and help for addiction that consumes their lives, as it once did mine. Stating it simply, I am living proof that faith-based recovery works.

Standing Strong in Recovery,

William Walter