

As a person in long term recovery I would like to thank you for allowing me to testify here today. What long term recovery means to me is that I have not used a mood altering substance since December 19, 1981.

What you can expect from the monies you have given to these issues is that people will recover. People do recover. We hear much today of the epidemic of heroin and opiate addiction, and we should hear much about it. It is just a part of the picture.

I can share with you that enormous resources was allocated to me in the 1970s from the courts to the Veteran Administration. I am sure there were people that was hesitant to expend any monies. I didn't believe I was capable of recovery. But there was also people in the recovery community and providers that encouraged me to not give up, to keep trying. I did keep trying.

That is why I wanted to testify today. There is so much negative exposure about the diseases of addiction from Alcoholism to Opiate / Heroin addiction. I wanted to share the positives of Long-term Recovery.

Long-term recovery has made it possible for me and others to create sober houses and sober club and meeting halls for twelve-step groups.

Long-term recovery has made it possible to share my story with countless individuals wanting to hear a message of hope and a way for them to recover.

Long-term recovery has made it possible for me to do street outreach, to reach people that have given up on themselves, to reach people that are homeless, to reach veterans, to reach parolees for over 35 years. That seems like a long time, but there are are many that have been doing this work for much longer.

Long-term recovery has enabled me to show compassion to individuals who are exactly where I was prior to December 19,1981. To hold myself to a standard of inclusion to promote the idea, that if I can recover, you can recover.

There are hundreds of thousands of Ohioans in recovery from Mental Health Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders that are depending on you to show compassion for people that may not realize they even want to be in recovery today.

Without your voice and vote to fund what are chronic, progressive and too often fatal illnesses there will not be dignity, there will not be pathways for ALL Ohioans. As in times past, only the wealthy will have resources for their recovery. That would not be an Ohio to be proud of.

Please support the efforts of those that are telling this population to keep trying, to never give up. They deserve your support to continue this good work. Again I thank you for allowing me to testify today.

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