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Dontavius L. Jarrells

State Representative, Ohio House District 1

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the Community Revitalization Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 58. Today, I speak as someone who believes in the transformative power of recovery. That's why I'm proud to join Rep. Puzzulli—because we know that recovery housing can be a lifeline for individuals rebuilding their lives after addiction. But that lifeline is only effective when it's built on a foundation of accountability, integrity, and care.

Good recovery housing isn't just a place to stay. It is an essential part of the journey to healing, providing individuals the stability and support they need to regain control of their lives, restore their health, and reintegrate into society. But for recovery housing to be effective, it must be safe, structured, and supportive—a place where residents are treated with dignity, not exploited.

Unfortunately, the system we have today is far from perfect. We've allowed bad actors to exploit this crucial service, undermining the very recovery it's supposed to promote. Instead of being a place of hope, many recovery housing facilities have become a breeding ground for fraud, neglect, and even criminal activity. This bill is about ensuring that recovery housing works the way it's supposed to—for the people it's meant to help and for the communities that host these facilities.

In Ohio, we've seen firsthand the devastation caused by addiction. The opioid epidemic has ravaged our state, and recovery housing has become an essential tool in helping people move from crisis to recovery. But when that housing is overcrowded, unregulated, and unsafe, we aren't just failing those in recovery—we are putting entire communities at risk. We've seen the damage: neighborhoods burdened by facilities that operate outside of zoning laws, with no accountability. We've seen homes where residents are subjected to substandard living conditions, where their chances for recovery are undermined by neglect. We've seen individuals sent from distant parts of the state to recovery homes in communities that are already struggling, only to have their own recovery processes fall apart because the facilities are overwhelmed, under-resourced, or worse.

Let me be clear: this is not just a healthcare issue. This is a threat to the quality of life for Ohio families. Communities like those in Rep. Puzzulli's district have seen their neighborhoods disrupted—local businesses struggling, emergency services overwhelmed, and families living in fear. This is not the way recovery housing is supposed to work, and it's why we believe this bill is necessary.

House Bill 58 provides a balanced, thoughtful approach to ensure that Ohioans in recovery are placed in safe, supportive environments that are monitored and regulated. The establishment of a **Certificate of Need** will ensure that recovery housing is distributed where it is needed most, without overwhelming communities that are already struggling. Local **ADAMHS boards** will have the authority to inspect, investigate, and, if necessary, shut down facilities that are not meeting the necessary standards of care. This gives local leaders the tools they need to protect their communities and ensure that recovery housing is a positive force, not a disruptive one.

And yes, this bill requires a **modest bed fee** to fund enforcement. The price of doing nothing—of leaving the system unchecked—is far greater. We can't allow another year to pass while these problems worsen. The people of Ohio deserve better, and the people in recovery deserve better.

Colleagues, I'll simply end with this: **Recovery is hard work**. It takes courage, it takes determination, and it takes a community that believes in second chances. We have a responsibility to provide the kind of environment that fosters recovery—not one that enables exploitation. HB 58 is about making sure that recovery housing works for the people it serves—and for the communities it touches.

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 58 and for your commitment to making Ohio a place where recovery is not just a possibility but a reality for all those who seek it.

We are happy to answer any questions you have at this time.