

Chairman, Vice-Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Community Revitalization Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on HB58.

My name is Nich Hinds, and I'm a proud resident of Scioto County. I want to share my experience with recovery and explain why I fully support this bill. Like JD Vance, I was raised by my grandmother. My mom struggled with addiction, and I eventually fell into that same lifestyle. I'll never forget when it all came crashing down. With just three days left of my senior year, I was caught snorting opioids in the bathroom and expelled. I wasn't allowed to walk at graduation. The image of my grandma's face when she came to pick me up is something I'll carry with me forever. That was one of the lowest moments of my life.

You might think that would have been my wake-up call. It wasn't. In order to get my diploma, I was required to enter a recovery program, but at the time, I wasn't ready to change. Many of the people in that facility were just like me—resentful and uninterested in getting clean. Instead of healing, I learned new ways to get high without getting caught. It wasn't until I met my wife and found something to live for that I finally committed to sobriety. It was a long road, but I'm proud to say I turned my life around. Today, I'm an award-winning residential appliance repairman with a Fortune 500 company. I have a beautiful wife, a young son, and we recently bought our first home. I'm proud of the man I've become.

But not everyone is fortunate enough to find their way out. Everyone's journey to recovery is different, and while some of my peers were serious about getting clean, many weren't. The environment itself didn't help—dirty needles and burnt spoons were a constant hazard. Even just walking near the recovery houses or alleyways, you had to be careful. This is dangerous not only for people genuinely trying to recover but also for the surrounding community.

Rehab can be a powerful tool for recovery, but the flaws in the system are glaring. During my treatment, the recovery housing was overcrowded, unsafe, and lacked accountability. Unfortunately, those same issues have followed me to my new neighborhood. A recovery facility opened next to my home, and it's been a nightmare ever since. The house is overcrowded with men beyond its capacity, causing serious problems. My property value has dropped, and I no longer feel safe letting my kids play outside. We've had loud parties and music keeping us awake at all hours of the night.

Because I live in a rural, unincorporated township, I quickly learned that there's no zoning enforcement to address this, and even if there was this facility is protected by the Americans with Disabilities act. When I spoke to the landlord, she flat-out told me she didn't care—she was making more money renting to the facility than she ever could otherwise. This could happen anywhere, even next door to you. That's why the certificate of need is so important.

I'm not a legislative expert, but I know this: people in southern Ohio feel like no one in Columbus is listening. This is a real crisis that's impacting neighborhoods across our region. We need real oversight and accountability for recovery homes—not just to protect those in treatment, but also the communities they live in. Thank you for your time and for giving this issue the attention it deserves.

Nich Hinds, Scioto County resident