

Tara Thompson
Cleveland, OH
May 6, 2025

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, members of the House Community Revitalization Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 58. My name is Tara Thompson and I am a resident in recovery housing in Cleveland. As someone who has lived in recovery housing I know firsthand the critical role it plays in rebuilding lives. Recovery housing has been paramount in helping me turn my life around, and it's why I strongly believe that others should have access to the same opportunities. I am deeply concerned that this bill will severely limit access to safe, supportive housing for individuals working to rebuild their lives in recovery. This bill, while well intentioned, will restrict access to housing by adding bureaucratic barriers, will place an undue burden on smaller recovery housing operators, and will inevitably exacerbate racial and economic inequities.

Larger, well-funded organizations may thrive under the certificate of need process, while smaller recovery homes will invariably be shut out. They will not be shut out due to lack of quality or effectiveness, but because of regulatory and financial barriers. HB 58 will make it harder to open or expand recovery housing by adding red tape and government approval requirements. This creates delays and added costs that small, community-based providers, often operating on tight budgets, simply cannot absorb. Many of these homes are run by people in recovery who are responding quickly to local needs, but under this bill, they'd have to go through a complicated process just to add beds or move locations. At a time when we need more recovery housing, not less, this bill could limit access and make it harder for people to find safe, supportive places to live during a critical time in their recovery.

This bill will likely make existing racial and economic disparities worse. Communities of color and low-income areas already face barriers to treatment and housing, and this bill adds another layer. Smaller operators in these areas may struggle with the complex and costly approval process, and decisions could be swayed by bias, community opposition, or political pressure rather than a genuine assessment of need. Recovery housing should be accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live.

In closing, I speak from personal experience when I say that recovery housing saved my life. While the intention behind HB 58 may be to ensure quality in recovery housing, the reality is that this bill will create more barriers than solutions. It risks limiting access to safe, supportive housing for those in desperate need of recovery resources, especially in marginalized communities. Ohio already has thorough licensing and inspection procedures which effectively renders the costly certificate of need process redundant by adding duplicate oversight all while stifling innovation by boxing out small recovery housing operators. I strongly urge you to consider these points and to please not deny others the opportunity that I have had to rebuild my life. Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective.