



Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee

Proponent Testimony on HB 453

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Chairman Baldrige, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 453. My name is Cheri Walter, and I am the CEO of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. We represent Ohio's Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards.

We are very supportive of this bill and the intent to create a "Recovery Is Beautiful" license plate. Our association has been promoting the Recovery Is Beautiful messaging since 2014 as an effort to reduce stigma and spread awareness about mental health and addiction recovery.

The Recovery IS Beautiful movement has been working to provide individuals and families with hope and encouragement while changing the conversation throughout Ohio in regard to mental illness and addiction. We want people to know and understand that:

- Mental illness and addiction are chronic diseases.
- Both mental illness and addiction can be treated - **Treatment Works and People Recover.**
- **Recovery is to be celebrated** - individuals in recovery become active, contributing members of their communities!

Proceeds from the license plate sales would go into a fund designated to support recovery throughout Ohio. This fund would be directed to organizations that directly support individuals and families impacted by mental health and substance use disorders.

This license plate would continue to help reduce stigma and celebrate recovery throughout Ohio. I urge you to support the passage of this legislation. As an individual in long-term recovery and a professional in this field, I look forward to putting this license plate on my car.

As I conclude, I want to extend our thanks to Representative Jarrells for introducing this legislation and continuing to promote recovery and support Ohioans impacted by mental illness and substance use disorders.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Should you have any questions, please contact me at cwalter@oacbha.org.

