Sheila Young, Executive Director, Second Wind Foundation

I appreciate the time you are taking to read this testimony. I am a woman in long term recovery, and it has been my honor to dedicate 2 decades of my professional life to the Second Wind Foundation. I began as a case manager at Willow Grove (est. 2005) transitional housing for women in early recovery in 2006 and have served in multiple roles until being hired as executive director in 2017.

In that time, I have witnessed a lot. A lot of perseverance, growth, joy, hard work, frustration, and unfortunately a lot of grief. During the pandemic staff and I went on many overdose calls to hotels, homes, etc. It became apparent to me, as we visited the places they stayed, the likelihood of their getting well in those locations was nearly nil.

During that year we were able to purchase a home and with the help of the community prepared it for recovery housing. Jack's House opened in August of 2021 affording men in early recovery the same opportunity for safe and supportive housing that women at Willow Grove had been enjoying for 15 years.

After all I have witnessed and learned I ask you to support the Opioid Settlement Advisory Council's recommendations to support recovery residences in VT. OSAC's recommendations include $1.75 million to maintain the same level of support for an increasing number of operators and $200,000 for scholarships to cover initial fees at a Recovery Residence.

Our residents have used the scholarship money upon arrival at our housing. They *and we* appreciate the time they have to get settled in the recovery community without the worry of being behind in their fees immediately upon moving in. We work with all of our residents on career goals. Most individuals secure jobs with a decent wage and good benefits where they are valued. This has better long-term results than quickly dashing to get the "recovery job" (fast food, convenience store, etc..) which likely is a dangerous space for them. The window of time the scholarship allows them to make deliberate and healthy decisions is invaluable.

Lastly, I ask that you support S.157: Language in Sec. 2(b)(1)(C) effectively ensures the safety of all residents when an individual relapses or engages in behaviors that jeopardize the recovery and well-being of others in the residence.

The person who has relapsed needs a safe space with clinical services. Our 2 recovery homes are not qualified to provide this service. We will hold a bed for a predetermined amount of time if the person chooses to get help and re-commits to recovery. We can access appropriate treatment and stabilization beds while the individual works on being able to return our housing. The landlord-tenant law discourages the development of more recovery residences in Vermont. S.157 clarifies that recovery residences differ from typical rental housing in that their programs provide accountability and standards, and a peer community to share the journey.

This also provides the safety needed by the residents living at Jack's House or Willow Grove who count on their environment being free from the dangers of being near substances, active substance use or behaviors that are unhealthy for the person trying to develop a recovery lifestyle. Also, residents working with probation or DCF risk receiving violations which could result in them becoming incarcerated or losing rights regarding their children.

Residents are very thankful for the space they have at Willow Grove and Jack's House, and I hear them loud and clear when they say, "I couldn't have done it without WG or JH". This is partly because they finally have a safe space to recover.

And they do. Recover. During the Thanksgiving holidays Willow Grove had a "Friendsgiving" celebration. Here is the text that went along with a photo of women and children sitting on the steps of Willow Grove:

> *At our Friendsgiving Dinner we captured in this photo 20 adult women with a total of 129 years and 10 months in successful recovery from substance use disorder.*
>
> - *4 current residents 2 years 9 months*
> - *7 former residents 35 years 1 month*
> - *9 supporters 92 years*
> - *and 8 children having fun with their mothers in recovery!*
>
> *The Second Wind Foundation is very proud of our transitional housing Willow Grove.*
>
> *We are grateful to Maggie, Christy, Neama and current residents for their hard work to make Friendsgiving happen.*
>
> *Former residents, members of the recovery community and our friends are appreciated for their investment in the lives of Willow Grove women past and present.*

Thank you for reading this letter and considering the great need of funding recovery housing and the importance of the landlord/tenant law.

Most sincerely,

Sheila Young

Sheila Young, Executive Director
Second Wind Foundation
Operating: Upper Valley Turning Point peer recovery center
Jack's House recovery housing for men
Willow Grove recovery housing for women