



Vermont Foundation of Recovery

January 29, 2020

Please accept this letter as a written testimony on behalf of the Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR) in regard to H783.

VFOR is a federally recognized 501c3 organization established in December of 2013. VFOR currently has six homes and supporting transitional apartments located in Chittenden, Franklin, Caledonia and Lamoille counties, and are actively on course to open two homes in each of the twelve Vermont Agency of Human Service regions. These homes are located in proximity to established social services required for wrap around support essential to the recovering population.

This bill is of great importance to our organization moving forward, as we establish homes across the state where the need for recovery residences (RR) is indicated. The clarity of zoning definitions to accept a RR as a single family dwelling will enable VFOR members to reside in mainstream neighborhoods and initiate the process of becoming productive community members by connecting with others, accessing necessary support services, and building social capital.

Access to safe sober housing, transportation, employment, and comprehensive recovery support is a key component for success to a person in early recovery. From a recent comprehensive report, funded by the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, "Vermonters with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) and their families are among our most vulnerable neighbors. ... Housing instability represents one of the greatest external hurdles to a recovery that is already inherently difficult". VFOR is on board to be one of the many parties necessary to meet the housing needs of the recovery community.

Clarifying the definition of RRs statewide will eliminate barriers and discrepancies from town to town in relation to aligning with zoning regulations. Designation of RRs as a single family dwelling, where appropriate, will allow VFOR residences in neighborhoods that are conducive to recovering individuals assimilating back into the community with equal footing while reducing stigma.

In addition, the bill will alleviate potential for discrimination, while allowing for suitable actions concerning reoccurrence issues and safety of the residences in the home. Applicable landlord/tenant law adjustments for designated RR operators will allow for safe policies to be established that align with state laws to protect the individuals in the homes.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or VFOR Executive Director, David Riegel, for further testimony as needed. VFOR is appreciative for your service and supportive of the efforts to ease the barriers to recovery housing in the state. We look forward to being involved as one voice in the recovery landscape of Vermont.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Latulippe, President

Vermont Foundation of Recovery

802-279-2990