

TO: House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Recovery Partners of Vermont

RE: S.157 Markup

DATE: April 14th, 2026

Dear Chair Wood,

Recovery Partners of Vermont, which represents the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR), the Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR), Jenna's Promise, and all certified recovery residences in the State as well as recovery centers, would like to follow up to our previous testimony on S.157 with the following information as your committee begins markup on the bill:

1. It is critical to keep the phrase "*or other alternative temporary housing*" in the bill as an option for where residents may go if they need to exit a residence.

EXPLANATION: In order to be certified, residence operators **must** have a safety management plan in place for **each** resident. These plans are written with the resident, and the resident self identifies any options they have for alternative housing if they are asked to leave the residence. For many members, this includes ***staying with family or friends***. It is impossible to capture all of these options with technical terms in a bill, and we must protect the option to stay with trusted family or friends as an acceptable alternative temporary housing option. It is already standard practice to hold beds when a member is exited, and members may return.

2. The language "*is charged with a criminal offense*" **and** "*engages in theft*" is critical.

EXPLANATION: This language comes from specific examples residences have experienced over the past two years, including theft *within* the residence. When you are in early recovery, it can be very damaging to your healing journey to have something of value stolen. And, we know it is better for the person who is committing theft to handle the situation without involving law enforcement. In terms of being only "charged" with a criminal offense, ***time is of the essence when it comes to the health & safety of individuals in early recovery***. We have experienced instances of one resident *pressuring* another to commit a crime. When these complaints come from members in the home, it is critical to act swiftly to protect the health and safety of the home.

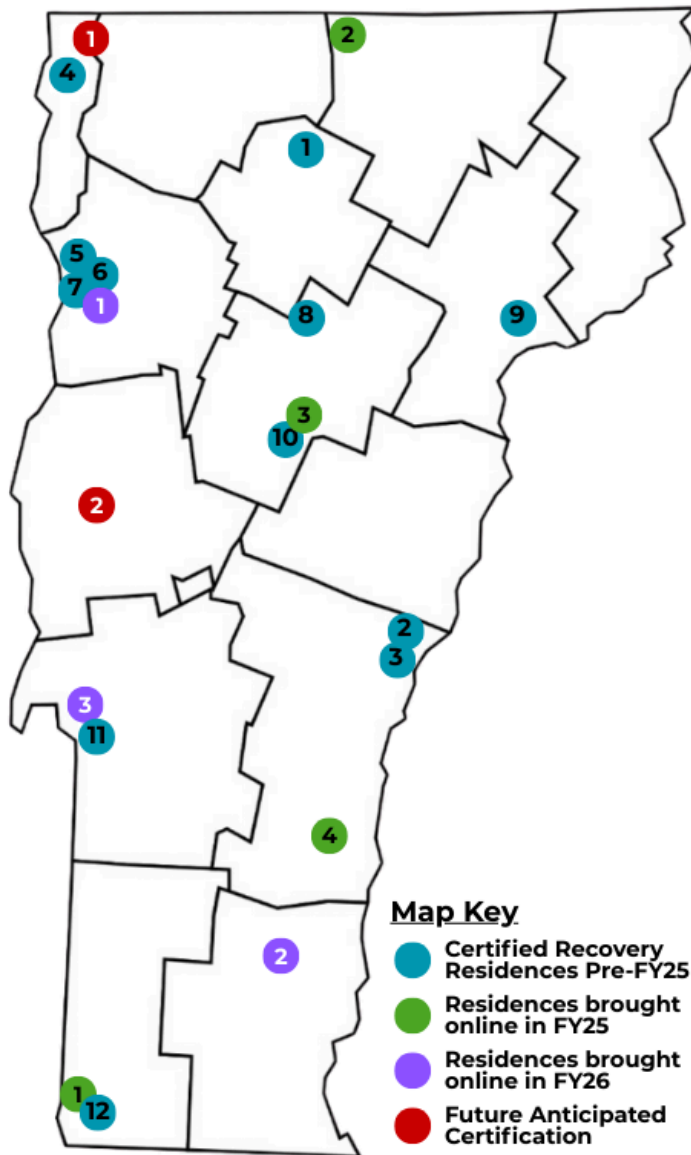
3. Vermont's certified residents ask the House Committee on Human Services to please add **Sec. 4460** to the list of Title 9 Sections that residence operators are exempt from.

EXPLANATION: Staff do not just visit these homes; they work there. **Residences are program sites where staff have office space**. They must be able to enter the home to conduct administrative work and maintain the facility, even when members are out. Furthermore, staff are the primary point of contact for new members arriving from treatment. Transportation for these individuals can be fluid leading to rescheduling at the last minute. Because we aim to welcome new members and provide orientation in the privacy of the home, ***a 48-hour notice requirement is logistically impossible***. To properly serve someone the moment they are ready to transition, staff must have the flexibility to be present in the home to greet them and begin the orientation process immediately regardless of last-minute schedule changes. This change simply reflects the reality of how residences operate in the field.

Many behaviors can be triggering for people in early recovery, and it is the members within the residence and the operator of the residence who are best suited to handle threatening situations, together. Complaints are filed **by the members themselves**, who are empowered to advocate for what they need, and many steps are taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved.

To further address concerns, please consider the following data:

- ★ **58%** of all residents across VT entered *into* a certified residence *from* homelessness.
- ★ **0%** of residents living in residences certified by VTARR were exited into homelessness over the last two pilot years.



Recovery Residences in VT

Certified Recovery Residences Pre-FY25:

1. Jenna's Promise, Rae of Hope, Johnson (women)
2. Second Wind Foundation, Willow Grove, White River Junction (women)
3. Second Wind Foundation, Jack's House, White River Junction (men)
4. VFOR, St. Albans (men)
5. VFOR, Essex A/B (men)
6. VFOR, Essex (women)
7. VFOR, Essex C/D (men)
8. VFOR, Morrisville (women)
9. VFOR, St. Johnsbury (men)
10. VFOR, Barre (women & children)
11. VFOR, Rutland (men)
12. VFOR, Bennington (women)

Residences brought online in FY25:

1. Paradise House, Bennington (men)
2. Ben's House, Newport (men)
3. Good Samaritan Haven, Barre (people experiencing homelessness)
4. Springfield Turning Point Recovery House (co-ed)

Residences brought online in FY26:

1. 10 Beds added at VFOR Essex women's location
2. Springfield Turning Point, Chester
3. Common Ground Recovery, Rutland (men)

Future Anticipated Certification:

1. Hope Grove, St. Albans
2. VFOR, Middlebury



Questions and comments can be directed to RPV Executive Director, **Suzie Walker**

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