

**Hi everyone.**

**I'm Gregory Tatro, the Co-Founder of Jenna's Promise. I'm probably not going to break any news here when I say that I'm speaking on behalf of Jenna's Promise. But I'm also here to advocate on behalf of all Recovery Residences, as well. From the Vermont Foundation of Recovery to Ben's House, to Second Wind, there is a whole mosaic of residences scattered across this state, as lighthouses—beacons to those looking for a safer shore.**

**I'm here to ask you to support these organizations, including the proposed opioid settlement recommendations for residences — \$1.75 million for ongoing operations and \$200,000 for scholarships. And I'm here to explain why S.157 deserves your support as well.**

**But my hope is that I can do this from a somewhat unique perspective of a Recovery Village.**

**This Sunday will mark seven years since I got a call in the middle of the night from my father. He told me my sister Jenna had died and that I needed to come over immediately. I'll never forget that night — the immense pain and horror, the wrenching of the seams of a whole family that will forever carry an emptiness. You can't go through a moment like that unscathed.**

**And yet Jenna's desire to help others would inspire what became Jenna's Promise. It's hard to believe that hope can come from a night like that — that daybreak could be birthed from heartbreak. But it can. We saw the gaps my sister continued to fall through, and we wanted to build something that could fill them for those who might need the supports that Jenna did.**

Today, Jenna's Promise is unique in that it is what we call ourselves a "Recovery Village--" a means of looking at a holistic way of recovery that integrates four pillars: a program-based residential system with a workforce development program, a health and wellness program, and therapeutic supports. And Jenna's Promise doesn't lift only the people inside our doors — it lifts the town around us. We've helped empty buildings become workplaces, neighbors let slip the stigma that casts the shadow of judgment on those in recovery, and a community once defined by loss begin to be defined by new life.

This is an integrated ecosystem where housing, clinical care, wellness, work, and community life operate as one coordinated pathway. At Jenna's Promise the residence is one building in a larger village, not the container of it.

Each pillar has phase requirements for residents to move through. When they have succeeded in the requirements of each pillar, they can move on to the next of 4 phases. And I have the most amazing team who pours every ounce of themselves into the work— not because they make tons of money – let's be real, this is a nonprofit. They, like myself, *believe*. They believe in the work, in the mission, in the residents looking for another chance. Two of those people are in the room right now with me— Madison Perry who runs workforce and April Christensen who runs the residential part of Jenna's Promise. They drive an hour to work—*put up with my dad jokes*— because they believe that the work of recovery is their calling.

When you support places like Jenna's Promise—you don't ONLY support the incredible residents, *you support the people who move mountains for them*. People like April and Maddie.

**And that brings us to S. 157.**

**It gives lawful footing to compassionate accountability.**

**At Jenna's Promise, expectations live across the Village. Almost every resident gives the Recovery Village their all. It's only in rare cases that our team is forced, after exhausting all actions, to act. A resident may refuse Clinical engagement, or undermine the Workforce community. Those challenges can occur outside the residential pillar — yet the only legal mechanism to protect the whole is a decision that touches residency.**

**S.157 aligns the law with lived reality. It allows an interdisciplinary team to act — not in punishment, but in stewardship of the community.**

**Because our process already moves with care:**

- **accountability plans with restorative action**
- **team meetings and improvement plans**
- **probation over weeks and then even phase-backs, and often a final warning after that**
- **repeated chances to choose the path forward and engage in the program they signed up for**

**Only after every option, often over months, is exhausted does exit become a last resort.**

**S.157 gives us permission to be consistent, fair, and responsible. Residents will tell you that when someone cannot engage with the supports of the program, the impact is felt by everyone trying to rebuild their lives.**

**Most people will tell you accountability is critical in early recovery. It's the banks of the river, the channel that keeps the water flowing forward. That's why our Recovery Village offers so many supports — and we aren't alone in this. Our incredible partners and allies in the world of recovery residences will tell you they also offer supports to help their guests stay on the path they have worthily worked and walked down.**

**This bill doesn't make any of us harsher.**

**It makes us safer, fairer, and more predictable.**

**And for residents trying to rebuild their lives, predictability is a form of hope.**

**Because, in recovery, even hope needs scaffolding.**

**I saw what happened with Jenna when she returned home after treatment with few options to continue her journey — no scaffolding to hold up her early recovery. I know if she had access to the growing infrastructure of our friends who have built that mosaic of recovery residences, she would have had a better shot. I hope, had there been a Jenna's Promise for her, that maybe she would be here in this seat instead of me.**

**But the scaffolding wasn't there. And now, for seven years, she hasn't been either.**

**They say the greatest lessons in life are purchased with pain. I wouldn't be in this room asking for your support for S.157 and for the proposed opioid settlement recommendations for residences — \$1.75 million for ongoing operations and \$200,000 for scholarships — if I didn't believe it would genuinely make a difference.**

**And in the dangerous world of recovery, a difference too often is whether you spend your Christmases with that gaping hole in your family — or with your youngest boy laughing at that dinner table beside the aunt he should have met and known and**

**loved.**

**So please, support all of us—Recovery Residence, Recovery Village and our incredible teams that go above and beyond—in making that difference.**

**Thank you**