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ORGANIZATION: Vermont Foundation of Recovery and Recovery Partners of Vermont

LOCATION: Bennington, VT

SUBJECT: Recovery Day Testimony

Good afternoon, chairs and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Sherona Campbell, and I am here to share my lived experience and to ask you to continue supporting recovery residences in Vermont.

I am a person in recovery. But long before I ever struggled with substances myself, I was a child growing up surrounded by addiction, dysfunction, and trauma.

Some children grow up feeling safe and supported. I grew up learning how to read moods, walk on eggshells, and stay quiet. I learned early that what happened inside our home stayed inside our home, even when it hurt, even when it scared us, even when we needed help. Addiction felt normal. Chaos felt normal. Fear felt normal.

When trauma becomes normal, you don't realize how heavy it is until you try to put it down.

That weight followed me into adulthood. Like so many people with trauma histories, I found a way to numb it. Substances did not feel like a choice at first. They felt like relief. Like quiet. Like an escape from pain that never really had a safe place to go.

But addiction does not heal trauma. It only adds more pain.

There were times when I truly did not believe I would make it out. I did not think stability, peace, or real happiness were possible for someone like me. I believed survival might be the best I could hope for.

Then I found recovery housing, specifically a Level II certified recovery residence through Vermont Foundation of Recovery.

Living in a Level II certified recovery residence meant I was not doing recovery alone. There was structure built into each day, clear expectations, and accountability that helped keep me grounded when my own judgment was still fragile. I had responsibilities, routines, and boundaries that created safety, not just for me, but for everyone in the home.

Just as importantly, I lived alongside peers who understood exactly what I was going through. We held each other accountable, supported one another through hard days, and built a community rooted in honesty and



shared commitment to recovery. When challenges came up, they were addressed calmly and transparently, with safety and dignity at the center.

That balance of support and accountability made recovery feel possible. It gave me the space to breathe, to slow down, and to begin separating who I was from the trauma and addiction that had shaped my past.

Through Vermont Foundation of Recovery, I experienced compassionate staff, peer leadership, and consistent expectations. I was supported without being rescued, and held accountable without being punished. That combination helped me move from addiction to recovery, and from recovery toward independence.

Today, I am not just surviving. I am living. I am giving back. I am supporting others who are where I once was, because I know how powerful it is to feel safe, supported, and believed in during early recovery.

Recovery residences are more than places to live. They are bridges. They are second chances. They are environments where people can stabilize, rebuild trust in themselves, and learn that their past does not have to define their future.

Without recovery housing, many people do not get that chance. And when people do not get that chance, families suffer, communities suffer, and too often, lives are lost.

I am here today because recovery residences work. They provide stability, accountability, and community at a critical moment when people are most vulnerable. I respectfully ask you to continue supporting recovery residences in Vermont so more people have the same opportunity I was given.

Thank you for your time and for listening to my story.