

Testimony of Michael Askew, Senior Peer Services Coordinator  
Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery  
Bridgeport Recovery Community Center  
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Good Afternoon, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. I am here today to express concerns about H.B. 5243 An Act Concerning Sober Homes. I am Michael Askew from the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) where I manage the Bridgeport Recovery Community Center (BRCC). I have been in sustained recovery since May 28, 1989.

CCAR has been raising awareness with the importance of Recovery Support Services since 1999, with recovery housing being one of those services. And now, more than ever before, we have members who have experienced first hand, how important safe, sober housing is in their recovery.

Through my position as Manager at the BRCC, I have seen many people come into recovery through having safe sober housing and be able to establish themselves in their community. My experience is one of those.

In 1989, I received a five-year prison term and in spite of my situation, a ray of hope came in 1992 when I received recovery housing for the first time after coming out of the prison system numerous times without. I was able to support my recovery, which in the long run help me became employable, pay taxes, become a father figure, go to church, sit on boards and committees in my community and most importantly become a law-abiding citizen. I became a leader amongst leaders.

You see, I shot dope, and smoked crack for a long time. Thank GOD for recovery housing.

I know that sobers housing helps support people who come back into the community that may not necessarily have anywhere else to go. With the lack of available sober housing in the Bridgeport area, we need funding for more sober housing, we need support from city and state officials like yourself to keep hope alive by providing more housing options for people in recovery. Daily, people come into the Bridgeport Recovery Community Center looking for safe, sober housing. It works, that's why they continue to ask for it.

I am sure CCAR, Housing Coalition and the recovery community will join ranks with DHMAS in helping local zoning boards and this committee ensure that these sober houses stay compliant with local zoning standards and that we work together to support the continuum of care. I know DHMAS is committed to this, for I sit on their State Advisory Board.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to address this committee with the recovering communities concerns. Please do not put in place a statute that may well jeopardize access to housing for persons who are striving to recover their lives and become productive members of society. Please consider working with DMHAS, The Recovery Housing Coalition of CT and the recovery community to accommodate community needs.

Thanks be to GOD.

Michael Askew