

LD 1973

Good afternoon Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Nick Loscocco. I am a person in recovery and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor here in Maine.

The creation of a study group to look at potential mandatory certification of recovery residences is a useless waste of time for anyone that might be involved including this committee and this hearing right now.

Every concern brought up by proponents of mandatory certification falls into the category of conduct that is already unlawful. If communities who are host to these residences take issue with some part of their operation that is unlawful then they can use their existing law enforcement resources to enforce existing law. Exploitation of people with disabilities, sex trafficking, drug trafficking; these are some of the concerns folks have that they claim could be mitigated by mandating certification. These are ALL ALREADY CRIMES.

The state has no place in determining how a private property owner goes about using that property. If a person wants to rent out rooms to folks in recovery then that is their prerogative, and outside of otherwise unlawful behavior, such activity is no business of the state's. Again, if there are concerns about illegal activity, we already have existing mechanisms for investigating those potential violations.

Another reason that this type of mandate would be poor policy is because there is no appropriate avenue for HOW someone might go about becoming certified. Creating a new state agency to take this on should be a non-starter for anyone even slightly aware of the current budget climate. Placing this role onto an existing agency would be equally problematic because of the same lack of resources, not to mention, again, it's not the state's business what someone does with their own property unless and until they do something unlawful. And lastly, giving this power to an NGO with no public accountability, which has already shown to be inconsistent in their approach to certification, and only stands to financially benefit from mandating residences to apply to become certified and pay their fees should also not be considered a viable option.

You might say that the proposed study seeks to hash out some of the concerns of issues that have been raised here; that may be true. I would still argue that is a complete waste of everybody's time. These issues are limited in scope, occur infrequently, and we have existing mechanisms for addressing them. Let communities address instances of potentially bad actors operating "recovery residences" as they see fit with their existing enforcement resources.

I urge to you to vote to scrap this idea entirely, and vote no on this resolution.