

Testimony of Summer Morton
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Eugene, Oregon – Chapter 13 Lane County Oxford House Rosetta

I am opposed to HB 2239 because it threatens to impose a certification process on Oxford House Incorporated that is not held on equal footing with the NARR certification process already in place in Oregon.

There is a critical and outstanding need for recovery houses in Oregon. Recovery residences serve as an essential resource by providing safe, accessible, and diverse options for individuals in recovery. The Oxford House model is unique in that each house is run democratically by its members through a simple voting process. This process ensures that every resident has an equal voice in decisions—from choosing new members to determining how every penny of the house account is spent. In contrast, many state-run recovery houses rely on a house manager to make unilateral decisions, thereby reducing individual accountability and empowerment.

For a person newly embarking on recovery, the opportunity to make decisions about their own care and the well-being of their housemates is invaluable. This model teaches trust, accountability, and mutual support, which are fundamental to long-term recovery. The process has been tested over 50 years, consistently demonstrating higher recovery rates compared to traditional recovery or halfway houses. Furthermore, when a relapse does occur, Oxford House welcomes the individual back, reinforcing the notion that recovery is a continuous journey rather than a one-time event.

My own life—and the lives of my children—were transformed by the structure, accountability, and support provided by an Oxford House. If I had not experienced this self-empowering environment, I would not have been able to achieve and sustain my sobriety. I now serve as Chapter Chair and work to support other houses in Lane County, further underscoring my commitment to this model.

I respectfully urge policymakers to reconsider HB 2239, ensuring that any certification process is applied equally to all recovery housing models. Protecting the Oxford House model means preserving a proven, effective method of recovery that empowers individuals and builds strong, supportive communities.