

Kristen Hensley-  
[Hensleykd@my.lanecc.edu](mailto:Hensleykd@my.lanecc.edu)  
Eugene Oregon- Chapter 13 Lane County Alumni

I am opposed to bill HB 2239.

The certification process of Oxford House Incorporated should be held on equal footing as the NARR certification process in Oregon.

I believe there to be an outstanding need for recovery houses in Oregon. I also believe that the option to have different resources and types of recovery houses with different programs is needed. Oxford House is ran self democratically and uses a simple voting process in each house. This process allows each house to have an equal vote in every aspect pertaining to the house. The process allows each person to have their own voice, opportunity to express their views, and the chance to vote for something in which they believe is right or wrong. The voting process is applied to every aspect such as voting new members into the house, voting on the specific guidelines for that individual houses (house rules), and even voting on where every single penny in the house account goes to. Nothing in each house is done without the approval from the whole house, unlike many state ran recovery houses in Oregon who use house managers to make all the house decisions.

The ability to give a recovering addict, brand new to recovery, the option to choose the best decision for the safety and well being of themselves AND their house mates, is an act of selflessness that we are not taught to use on the streets. But this person is given this power by the members before him, so that he can learn to trust and love the people around him again. These behaviors are learned and taught to the newest members moving in to the house. The model is passed down person after person and it has been shown that it WORKS. That model relies on 3 conditions being, each house remains self democratically, expelling anyone that returns to active addiction and everyone paying their fair share of rent (EES). These charter conditions are the staple and fundamental foundation of our houses and keep our houses and members safe.

We have the easiest interviewing and application process across the state, in fact the country. We have the most assessable resources and the county depends on our housing to help more than half of the homeless population off the street and out of treatment centers coming directly into our houses. This is because the wait time is almost close to none if there is a vacancy in a house. It is extremely rare that a person gets denied into a house, but when and if that happens, we give them multiple other recovery house resources so they have somewhere to go. We also are one of the only types of housing that allows us to have an emergency bed in each house so that if someone is in dire need of a bed because of a violent or unsafe situation, they are allowed to be voted in for a couple days until somewhere safe is found.

The guidelines and processes we use in these houses are the fundamental tools that make Oxford House great, and they are also what makes us different than any other recovery house in this state. Our houses hold the highest statistically shown recovery rate over any other type of

housing in the state. By giving these people the power to do what's good for them and everyone around them because they have seen that the process has worked for them members before them, is different then a person who feels that they are only doing what they have to because they have someone over them telling them they need to do it.

Oxford House creates the type of environment that makes people want to be call their houses a home. Our house mates become family and our biggest support system. Most people go out and relapse when they feel they have no support or the need to feel wanted and loved. And that is what makes Oxford the best. Each member feels important and EQUAL, no matter their history or background.

The number of people leaving or relapsing an Oxford house has shown to be way slimmer than the regular recovery or half way house. And on top of that, when they do relapse, Oxford welcomes them BACK with open arms, so they can continue doing the right thing, and that is fighting. The more a person comes back, the stronger they become in their fight against addiction. And that is what these types of houses are meant to be doing. Helping every addict stand and fight in the disease of addiction.

I know that Oxford saved me and my children's lives. If I had not had the rigid structure, accountability and support that I had in my house, then I never would have been able to finally move out on my own. That house gave me the skills needed to learn how to live properly on my own. I believe that this bill will change the way that Oxford house was designed and built to be. The model has shown true time and time again or 50 years. Oxford house is not just a house, to us its family is our home.