

Chair Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Jesse Kubesh. Today, I submit this testimony in opposition of SB2128.

I want to share my personal story of overcoming addiction and successfully transitioning back into society. I believe that by telling my story, I can contribute to the ongoing conversation about addiction recovery, the challenges people face in reintegrating into society, and the policies that can help others like me.

For many years, I struggled with addiction. It affected every aspect of my life, including my relationships, my career, and my overall sense of self-worth. I made some very bad decisions which eventually led to being incarcerated for theft.

Through determination, support from loved ones, and the help of rehabilitation programs, I took the first step toward recovery. While in prison (MRCC) I worked in the Rough Rider Warehouse delivering furniture all over the state of North Dakota and then I was selected to work at the Bismarck State College doing Grounds Maintenance while I served out my sentence. Having these responsibilities gave me a newfound confidence in myself. I started facilitating Narcotics Anonymous meetings, I

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successfully completed drug & alcohol treatment and I tutored others going through treatment programs.

It wasn't easy, and there were many moments when I questioned whether I would ever be able to regain control of my life. But with persistence and support, I started to build the foundation for a healthier future.

One of the most significant challenges I faced was reintegrating into society. However, I came out prison with a full time job at the Bismarck State College which helped! Any problems I ran into in my reintegration phase I was able to solve on my own or had amazing resources (Bismarck Transition Center) and support systems to help navigate these challenges.

Today, I am proud to say that I have successfully rebuilt my life. I am still employed at the Bismarck State College but no longer in the Grounds Maintenance Department, I was promoted to Instructor/ Lab Assistant in the Carpentry/Residential Construction Department. I completed Peer Support Training and received my Peer Support Certification. I sponsor 4 individuals and mentor an additional 3 people. I have my own place and bought a car. I'm also taking college classes at BSC. I have learned invaluable lessons about resilience, the power of community, and the importance of second chances.

While I am incredibly proud of my journey, I know that many others face obstacles that make it difficult to overcome addiction and reintegrate successfully into society. I believe we need more support, including more transitional living facilities, sober living, expanded work release programs and more peer support services. These resources are essential to helping people like me transition from recovery to a productive, fulfilling life.

I am reaching out today to encourage you to consider supporting policies and initiatives that promote recovery, reduce the stigma of addiction, and provide people with the resources they need to thrive.

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Thank you for taking the time to hear my story. I hope that by sharing my experience, I can help bring attention to the challenges of addiction recovery and reintegration. I truly believe that with the right policies and support, we can help many others experience the success I have.

Thank you. I can answer any questions you may have.