



TESTIMONY BY RICHARD GENTILE, ASSISTANT CORPORATION COUNSEL, TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

February 21, 2017

HB 5741, An Act Concerning Sober Living Homes and HB 5761, An Act concerning Sober Homes

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee.

Good Day. My name is Richard Gentile and I am the Assistant Corporation Counsel for the Town of East Hartford. I am here to provide testimony on behalf of East Hartford's mayor, Marcia A. Leclerc. Mayor Leclerc supports HB 5741, An Act Concerning Sober Living Homes, and HB 5761, An Act concerning Sober Homes.

Sober Homes do not provide treatment to their residents. Instead, they provide a structured living situation for people in recovery from substance abuse. The worthwhile goal of many of these facilities is to help residents adjust to a substance free world, find employment and long-term housing. The proposed bills do not unfairly regulate the location or ownership of sober homes. Instead the bills merely provide local officials with critical information as to who is responsible for the day to day operations at the home should a zoning, housing code, or life safety issue arise that might impact residents at the home or neighbors.

While Mayor Leclerc urges the committee to favorably report on these bills, she does ask that consideration be given to adding additional language that would require all sober homes to follow minimum standards such as providing all residents detailed information concerning substance use treatment options and the availability of off-site support groups. In addition, sober homes should be encouraged to adopt house rules that set expectations as to behavior, non-use of alcohol and drugs and attendance at house meetings. The goal would be to provide some of the same type of positive services and structure for residents of non-certified homes as those that currently exist for residents in Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services certified supportive recovery housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.