

Submitter: Kiah Jackson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

My name is Kiah Jackson, and I am writing this not as a policymaker or an expert but as someone who was once lost and thought there was no way out, drowning in addiction. I am now 18 months clean. Im writing this to urge you to support Hb 3197 because I know firsthand that recovery is possible, but only when strong support exists.

Growing up in a family built around addiction, I saw directly how it affects not just individuals but entire generations. I started using at 13 years old. It was first something fun to do with my friends but quickly became something I depended on, and I always needed more. I was always chasing the next high. I was lying to my friends and family, stealing money for drugs, hanging out with bad influences and never going to school. My mom always knew that I was using, but she didn't know how to stop me.

Until one day during my freshman year of high school. I was caught up in an incident that got me involved in a dangerous situation.

This time I was forced to stop using. I was so angry. Angry at myself and the world. After my mom pulled me out of school, she realized I needed more help than just therapy.

After waiting a month, a bed opened up in a rehab and I got help. Not because the system made it easy, but because by some miracle, I found a program that had the resources to take me. Rehab didn't just save me from addiction, it gave me back my future. It gave me a support system I never had. Without it, I wouldn't be here today. The disgusting and sad truth is that so many teenagers don't get the help I got. I was blessed. So many youth are left without access to treatment, without someone who believes in them, without hope. That's why this bill matters. Many, like I was, are struggling with addiction in silence. Believing they're alone. And for teens like me, kids from families where addiction is all we've ever known. Having access to the right support can mean the difference between life and death.

I've seen the devastating impact of addiction on families, and I've lived through it. I've also experienced the incredible power of recovery. If we can get more funding to help prevent addiction and support those already affected, we can change the trajectory of so many young lives. We can give kids the chance to dream again, to heal, and to build a future they never thought was possible.

I am proof that recovery is possible. I am proof that investment in prevention and treatment works. But I shouldn't be the exception. Every teen struggling with addiction deserves a chance to heal, to rebuild, to hope. Please support Hb 3197 and help make that possible. Let kids live.