

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Julie Raether, and I am a woman in long term recovery. I am writing to offer testimony in support of any legislation that gives individuals with substance use disorders the greatest chance of long-term recovery by offering alternative programs that fit the individuals values and beliefs. There are many pathways to recovery.

I found long term recovery through a variety of pathways. I attended an intensive outpatient program and continued to strengthen my recovery after graduation. One of the most impactful supports I discovered along my journey was SMART Recovery. I did not feel comfortable in AA. SMART Recovery was exactly what I needed. It offered connection and a self-management style that was science driven and aligned with my values. My husband, who is also in recovery, and I attended a SMART Recovery meeting weekly via zoom. We believed in SMART Recovery so much that we went on to create a new meeting so others would have more options as well. Like all SMART Recovery facilitators, I was required to go through training to lead a meeting. I have been facilitating this SMART Recovery meeting weekly for over a year now. I have seen first-hand how SMART Recovery works. I have had members come to our meeting who have tried the traditional 12 step meetings and found SMART Recovery was a much better fit. Moreover, I have had multiple members say that our SMART Recovery meeting saved their life.

There are many people, like me, who need an alternative to AA that fits their personal recovery journey. For these people, mandating 12 step programs is not an effective solution.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julie Raether