

IN RECOGNITION OF MAPLEWOOD
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AS A 2018
NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. DAVID P. JOYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Maplewood Elementary School for being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2018. Since 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized public and private schools for academic excellence. This year marks the third time the Maplewood Local School District has been awarded this honorable distinction. Maplewood Elementary School holds high academic standards for each and every student. The Blue Ribbon recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the students, teachers, and administrators of this outstanding school. There is no greater cause than educating the minds of the future. As a father, I know the amount of trust parents put into the hands of our educators. I am proud to have this example of academic excellence in Ohio's 14th Congressional District and I congratulate Maplewood Elementary School on this well-deserved recognition.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS ON
SOBER LIVING HOME PROBLEMS

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform my colleagues about the hearing held by the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice on September 28, 2018 on the issue of sober living homes. I had the privilege of testifying at that hearing in support of my bill, H.R. 5724, to restore local oversight over sober living homes. As part of that testimony, I submitted to the Subcommittee letters from many of my constituents about problems with sober living homes caused by current federal law preventing appropriate local oversight. For the benefit of my colleagues and the American people, I include in the RECORD the first group of these constituent letters below:

Generally speaking, Mr. Rohrabacher, you're not someone I feel represents me as a constituent. However, this is one topic I agree with you on, and I never thought I'd say that. I've seen the sober living home industry firsthand. They exploit the desperation of addicts and their families, offer no real help, and when the addict relapses, they are kicked to the curb the same day and don't get prorated their rent money. If they paid for a month and get kicked out 3 days later, they lose all that money. It's actually more profitable for sober livings to have high failure rates because when the next person moves in, they effectively get paid twice for the bed; the forfeited rent and the new person's. The sober living home doesn't concern itself with whether or not the people they evict have somewhere to go. It's not surprising that many end up on the streets. Many sober living homes are poorly maintained, have bug infestations, are overcrowded, and residents regularly experience

theft and violence. If the purpose of a sober living is to give someone a fresh start and chance at redemption, which it should be, then the sober living home industry has failed miserably, and that failure has proven lucrative for those who profit from human suffering. More accountability is needed, addicts are people like everyone else, and deserve better.

STEPHANIE ASHLEY LARCOME,
Westminster, California.

About a year ago my small block of mostly retirees was introduced to "sober living homes". We were also introduced to loss of parking due to various vehicles with out of state plates, frequent local police responses, discarded needles, altercations both verbal and physical and loud music in the wee hours of the morning. Then the non-sober behavior escalated to the overdose and death of 24-year-old Mark Vallas of Chicago on February 24th, 2018. In March 2018, Tim Flinn, the co-owner of New Existence Recovery, which managed the sober living home where Mark Vallas died also overdosed and also died. On July 23rd, four squad cars, a fire truck and ambulance responded to yet another overdose at the same house. Last week a house three houses down from the initial sober living home converted to a sober living home. Last week, police responded to a call regarding the new sober living home. And two days later the Huntington Beach Police Department responded yet again. The current scenario of unregulated and unsupervised residences for addicts is not working. How many more addicts must die as local governments are threatened with lawsuits in an attempt to protect the health and welfare of all? Please take action and support corrective legislation. Thank you.

PATRICIA ANNE QUINTANA,
Huntington Beach, California.

We were the unfortunate neighbors of a sober-living home a few years ago. The occupants were a source of constant nuisance and criminal activity. My children couldn't play outside in our backyard due to the constant, heavy cigarette smoke and loud profanity coming from the residents. These homes don't belong in residential neighborhoods.

ANNE DEBIE,
Costa Mesa, California.

I have lived at this address for 12 years. I have lived in this neighborhood for 27 years. In that time, I have seen cars be broken into at night. If cars are left unlocked, they are ransacked and items taken such as electronic devices. This is routine and typical. Clearly it has increased over the years as more and more people come to the area for treatment and fail. This is a residential neighborhood and not a treatment/medical facility designated area. These homes are not normal by housing multiple adults that would typically have one or two residents in the same space otherwise. We need to stop encouraging such a huge influx of individuals into the community that don't have jobs, family or a productive reason for being here. It creates a huge burden on the city and its residents.

SHEILA CIMINI,
Costa Mesa, California.

I am a physician in Laguna Beach and my area and many others around me are inundated with sober living homes. Unscrupulous property owners are making a fortune housing these individuals, many recruited from out of state. I am sympathetic to these people and their problems, (as I have experienced the pain of addiction in my own family). However, many of these individuals seem largely unsupervised, hang out in

groups around local businesses and our beautiful beaches smoking and making these areas less desirable for children, locals and tourists. Once their coverage ends, (if they have not overdosed in these homes) they are dumped onto the street in my area and continue on as homeless. I very much would like to see out of state addicts stay out of state and the rapacious profits these homeowners make destroying my neighborhood ended.

JAMES RUSSELL, M.D.,
Laguna Beach, California.

A detox/sober living home went in across the street from me over 3 years ago. At the time my boys were 7 and 10. Too young to learn about drugs and inappropriate adult behavior. Since then, there have and continues to be: puking, fighting, patient dumping in front of my house, drugs being delivered to my house, medical supplies in front of my house, intimidation of residents and staff towards my children, we've almost been hit 3 times by staff and delivery persons while in my driveway, ambulances and firetrucks all hours of day and night, my house has been entered 3 times, my car broken into 2 times, my children cannot play out front from the amount of cars, over 20 or more all day and night, drug deliveries on a regular basis including 2 a.m., parking issues, women walking around naked, cars parked with strangers watching my children, blocking of street, residents coming back with knives and kept outside endangering all the neighbors, house not being taken care of and endangering others with hanging roof parts in howling wind, U-turns 24 hours a day aimed at my house, my children and me, parking in front of my driveway blocking my cars, enormous trash with all the vermin that goes with it, blocking of fire hydrant every day, screaming arguing women out front with foul language in front of my children, unknown amounts of addicts visiting residents and house while using my driveway and staring at my children, runaway cars with no drivers, drug dealers approaching me after school with children, men leaving the house through side doors in the middle of the night, volatile women coming and going scaring my children, boyfriends of staff coming and going all hours of the night, the residents have no air conditioning in extreme weather, no backup generator for power outages in cold weather, a regular hole in the front door, broken windows from storms, fire and rattlesnake hazard by not having regular yard maintenance, code violations from the city, drinking. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week businesses that cater to convicted criminals do not belong in residential neighborhoods just doors down from a middle school, a most vulnerable population. Businesses do not belong in neighborhoods at all. We moved here and paid millions to keep our children away from drugs, not to have them enter our house and have us living in fear. Have you ever had someone just walk into your home while you are with your family enjoying your Sunday afternoon or having Sunday dinner to the sound of puking out your front door? The fear that someone can walk into your home on drugs and fully high is paralyzing. Police cannot handle people high on drugs and they are trained and have weapons. Not once, not twice, but 3 times my house has been entered by a drug addict, a very scary staff person and a man trying to deliver dangerous meds in front of my children who would have died if ingested. I was told by the owner that they had insurance for that type of thing. Can you imagine losing your child or having them permanently injured but they have insurance? All in what was a safe neighborhood. No one locked their doors now we spend hundreds on security

cameras and lock our doors just to go to another room to do laundry in case someone decides to enter your house. Just last week a woman was outside yelling at a parked car about her situation. We had to hide in the house and be quiet because she might jump the fence and harm us if we were too noisy. I have boys. They are active. We have to modify our lives and have done for years. No playing out front without supervision. They are now 10 and 13. How sad to have lost part of their childhood. The workers talk very loudly about the residents and their private health problems right outside my door. They have special drivers that deliver some of the residents like they are at a hotel. Staff and residents are constantly changing, and they are not locals. How many of your neighbors move in and out daily? It's unnerving.

DIANE BABCOCK,
Laguna Beach, California.

I was driving home from getting breakfast at 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning. As I was stopped at a light I could see a young man in the area of a Bank of America shooting up drugs. I drove over to him and yelled at him to put that down and to stop doing drugs in public where kids can see him. He immediately put down whatever he was doing. I asked if he was hungry and he said he was. I gave him half of my sandwich. I asked him why he was out here and doing this. He said he went home and was high and they kicked him out of his sober living house a few days ago. They always end up on the streets if they fail their program. I've seen several times where sober living is failing these people and they seem to be worse off than when they lived around their family and friends and now have no way to get back home.

ADA THORNTON,
Costa Mesa, California.

Yes, there are problems with facilities that are not licensed. There are many that are though and are trying to help these people. I work at a facility in Huntington Beach, we are licensed with the state and certified with the Joint Commission. I'm the program director and deal mostly with our licensing. The problem with local governments that I've seen attempting to deal with the "problem" is that they try and shut down all the facilities, even the good ones trying to actually help. If the good facilities are forced to move out of neighborhoods, where would we go? Industrial areas aren't zoned to have people living there and the cost of having to lease a building and construct it to accommodate living facilities would put us out of business and other good facilities as well, meaning lots of people losing their jobs. There are many levels of care to the treatment process and the "sober living" you speak of is actually the lowest level of care, IOP, or a sober living is also just a house that's rented out by people that are sober and aren't actually affiliated with any kind of treatment program. Again, I think this bill would adversely affect the facilities that are trying to do the right things and help these people. IOP "sober living" does not require any licensing or certifications so they aren't held to any standards of conduct. Residential detox and RTC levels of care are. There needs to be a distinction between these in the bill. Unlicensed verses licensed.

JOSH JUROE,
Fountain Valley, California.

I'm writing regarding the sober living tragedy that is plaguing our community. My family and I live in Huntington Beach, CA

aka "Rehab Riviera" and this is a direct result of unethical body brokering into many sober living homes and rehab recovery centers throughout Huntington Beach.

Prior to this new generation of entrepreneurs focusing on the sick, weak, drug and alcohol addicted, this community was like a Mayberry at the beach. Now, our community has become a toxic waste of drug needles on the streets and across the beaches, zombie like drug addicted sober living tenants roaming at all hours of the night, burglaries, harassment, fear to go to our local parks due to drug deals and paraphernalia being constantly discovered and baggies of drugs being left to be picked up and handed to me by my children in the local grocery store parking lot.

This is a disgrace to our community and the situation is not be addressed by our local law enforcement. I personally have had several negative experiences with the tenants of the sober living homes, the recovery centers and those that decided to leave the unhealthy environments and live on the streets of Huntington Beach. The police have been called and they catch and release those that are clearly intoxicated with paraphernalia on them but "not enough" to arrest the person. My kids have picked up drug baggies and pointed at dirty needles and ran home from the parks due to the amount of "left by the wayside dropouts" from the recovery centers and sober livings residing at the parks. Deaths have occurred in the sober livings and my children's classmates have witness the deceased being rolled out and into ambulances. And to top it off, Wavelengths Recovery Center is based on Main Street and the owner, Warren Boyd along with his employees and "patients" cloak the street bringing their riffraff, along with foul language, smoking and hanging about in groups of at least 10 along Main Street, while they watch their new multimillion dollar facility being built on the corner of Main and Orange.

Is this what we want to show our children as a way of life, is this what the tax payers are wanting in their community? The answer is no! Wavelengths continues to buy up historical properties just to tear them down and build multi-roomed homes to maximize capacity for cash flow. It's unethical and when the fire marshal shows up to check the facility they are tipped off and take the overstock of people are relocate them temporarily or on a field trip in one of the many white vans that cruise through town aka "druggie buggies".

Or we can touch on the fraudulent activities that are being handled between the insurance companies and these facilities. What are you going to do to protect our families and put a stop to these heinous acts that are plaguing this community and many others around Southern California? The amount of money that is being made off the transactions between recovery centers, sober livings and privately owned detoxes is astronomical and unacceptable. And has become a misrepresented solution for those addicted.

I have many years of sobriety and once upon a time there was a chance to have the freedom I have today. For those that choose these facilities as a solution, there is a slim chance to stay sober. Our local politicians and law enforcement are not addressing this situation with any urgency and that is why I'm expecting you to take action on a larger scale. Please help us to restore safety to our community and remove these facilities.

Thank you,

ROBIN GRISHAM,
Huntington Beach, California.

We live kitty corner to a sober living house. We are constantly hearing dogs barking all night long. Several attempts were made with the manager to solve this issue however the dogs continue to bark. The residents of the facility are still using drugs as they were found at the school as well as selling drugs across the street from the middle school. That particular incident led to the police being called. The suspects ran through several backyards and tried to break into a house down the street. After this incident many residents including children are scared to sleep in their own homes and are seriously considering on moving. There are many children and elderly people in this area who are easy prey to drug dealers and users. I have been living here for 16 years and I am shocked that this type of thing is happening in my backyard. Not only has my sleep suffered I am having trouble concentrating at work. I am afraid for my special needs son's safety because the suspect ran through our backyard. If this continues people can get hurt or lose their lives if it escalates. Please help us stop the sober living houses from spreading. It is a scam. It doesn't help the people who are addicted. It allows them a safe place to continue to abuse drugs while stealing from the insurance companies to pay for treatment. These sober living houses only make the owner rich while exploiting those who need help.

JENNIFER SHIELDS,
Huntington Beach, California.

TRIBUTE TO DR. FERNANDO I. RIVERA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor Dr. Fernando I. Rivera as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Hispanic Heritage Month. Dr. Fernando I. Rivera is an Associate Professor of Sociology, Interim Assistant Vice-Provost for Faculty Excellence, and Director of the Puerto Rico Research Hub at the University of Central Florida.

His research interests and activities are in the sociology of health/medical sociology, disasters, and race and ethnicity.

His published work has investigated how different mechanisms are related to certain health and mental health outcomes with a particular emphasis on Latino populations.

Dr. Rivera's disaster research has explored the investigation of factors associated with disaster resilience and restoration and resilience in coupled human-natural systems. Other publications have investigated the Puerto Rican diaspora in Florida.

He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his B.A. degree in sociology from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez.

He also completed a National Institute of Mental Health sponsored post-doctoral fellowship at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research at Rutgers University.