

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2014**

Bill Number: S.219 Name of Bill: An Act Related to Sober Houses

Agency/Dept: Public Safety Author of Bill Review: Lt. John Flannigan

Date of Bill Review: 1/14/14 Status of Bill: (check one):

☒ Upon Introduction ☐ As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body ☐ As passed by both bodies

Recommended Position:

☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☒ Remain Neutral ☐ Support with modifications identified in # 8 below

**Analysis of Bill**

1. **Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** *Describe what the bill is intended to accomplish and why.*

This bill proposes to create a voluntary regulatory system for sober houses operating in the State of Vermont.

2. **Is there a need for this bill?** *Please explain why or why not.*

There is a need to build more capacity for "sober houses" according the VT Dept Of Health (ADAP).

3. **What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**  
None foreseen.

4. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

Little to no expense as these houses are not regulated currently.

5. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** *(for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc)*

No implications and bill is voluntary providing "common sense".

6. **Other Stakeholders:**

6.1 **Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?**

Those in specific substance abuse and health care would support this on principal and voluntary compliance.

6.2 **Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?**

Potentially those operating a sober house that does not want any government interference with how they run their homes.

7. **Rationale for recommendation:** *Justify recommendation stated above.*

Sober houses (defined) do not provide treatment; they provide a place where people can support one another in sobriety. They are not licensed by any state agency or subject to state regulation solely as sober houses (they may be subject to building and fire safety codes based on their size). And, because the Americans with Disabilities and the federal Fair Housing acts apply to people in recovery from substance abuse disorders, state and local zoning and other requirements meant to regulate them are subject to challenge.

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**This bill calls for voluntary compliance to make sober houses safer and more productive for those with substance addictions.**

**Attempts to reach the bill's sponsor, Senator Cummings and someone at AHS in housing were unsuccessful.**

**There is some specific areas cited in this proposed bill that would make any sober house to abide by. For example in (b)(3), " residents shall not have an outstanding criminal warrant". A sober house may not be able to easily know and/or obtain this information for any and all residents at their house.**

**8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:** *Not meant to rewrite bill, but rather, an opportunity to identify simple modifications that would change recommended position.*  
**None. The reason the recommendation is neutral as this does not have a direct impact on the Dept. of Public Safety.**

**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "K. Gray", is written over a faint rectangular stamp.

**Date: 1/28/14**

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