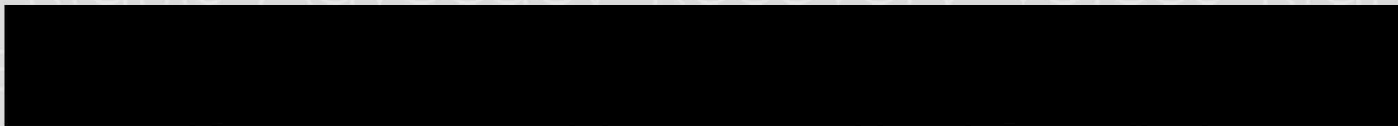


OP-ED TEMPLATE



SAMPLE OP-ED

Approximately 600 Words
Please Adapt With Your Own Story and Experiences.

[Date]

MEET ONE OF THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

WHY THE RECOVERY BILL OF RIGHTS IS IMPORTANT TO ME AND SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

In the beginning, I had no idea of how my addiction to **[Insert alcohol or other drugs]** was affecting me and my family. Later, it was clear that my addiction had taken control over my life. Something had to change. I know that I am not alone in this community as a person in long-term recovery from **[Insert alcohol or other drugs]** and I hope that my story helps others in **[Insert community/location]** to get the help they need to recover.

Alternative opening paragraph if you are a family member:

In the beginning, I had no idea how addiction was affecting me and my family. Later it was clear that **[My daughter/son; husband/wife; mother/father's]** addiction had taken control over our lives. Something had to change. I know that I am not alone in this community in experiencing the joy of seeing someone recover from addiction and I hope that my story helps others in **[Insert community/location]** to get the help they need to recover.

Please modify the text below to fit your situation:

While over 22 million Americans still live with addiction, there is hope for recovery. I know because I'm living proof that with the support of my family and friends and good care, I **[Insert family/friend relationship here]** was able to get well. Everyone who is still struggling with addiction should be treated with dignity and has the right to recover. That's why I believe a new public statement called **The Recovery Bill of Rights**, is so important.

The Recovery Bill of Rights was developed to encourage people who need help to get it and to empower people such as myself to speak out. Addiction is a public health crisis that affects one in four American families. Until we join together to address this crisis, the costs of untreated addiction will continue to mount – in deaths, escalating health costs, criminal justice costs, and broken families.

Navigating my path to recovery has given me a new life. Resources such as **The Recovery Bill of Rights** gives me hope that everyone in our community can enjoy lives free from addiction to alcohol and other drugs if we stand up for our rights. **The Recovery Bill of Rights** was developed by Faces & Voices of Recovery; a national organization made up of people in recovery, their families, friends, and allies.

[Tell your personal recovery story here]

There are many resources available to help people recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs – from mutual support groups to healthcare professionals. It is a journey that can take many different paths – through religious faith, spiritual experience, or secular teachings.

The Recovery Bill of Rights, along with my story, is a call to action for our elected officials and community leaders to increase support for people to recover from addiction and their families. We need to break the cycle of addiction in order to create a healthy and just society.

Today, recovery is even more possible because of the growing numbers of effective treatments and recovery supports. Long-term recovery has changed my life and the lives of those around me and now **[Insert something about your recovery experience]**.

I know that there are other people in our community who can have success in long-term recovery. We're very fortunate that recovery and treatment programs can be designed specifically for each individual and even their families, to ensure that they find a recovery path that works for them.

[Use this paragraph only if local or state statistics are available]. In our own community of **[City, region or state]**, **[Number]** people live with addiction, and countless numbers of them do not receive the same access to health care options that they would if they had other chronic disorders, such as diabetes or heart disease. These people are all around us – our neighbors, co-workers, friends and families.

Letting people know that they have a right to recover and expanding resources and access to treatment and recovery services will encourage more people to seek help. **[Name of organization]** encourages everyone in **[City]** with an alcohol or drug problem to exercise their rights and get on the road to recovery. And for people who have stopped using alcohol or other drugs, we need to make sure that we accept them back into our community and do not put up barriers that would make it difficult for them to get a job or housing.

Please join me in encouraging those in need of help to seek treatment and recovery. **[Name of your organization]** has joined with organizations across the country in endorsing **The Recovery Bill of Rights**. Please help us make those rights a reality.

The Recovery Bill of Rights (*abbreviated*)

1. We have the right to be viewed as capable of changing, growing
2. We have the right – as do our families and friends – to know about the many pathways to recovery, the nature of addiction
3. We have the right, whether seeking recovery in the community, a physician's office, treatment center or while incarcerated, to set our own recovery goals
4. We have the right to select services that build on our strengths
5. We have the right to be served by organizations or health care and social service providers that view recovery positively
6. We have the right to be considered as more than a statistic
7. We have the right to a health care and social service system that recognizes the strengths and needs of people seeking recovery
8. We have the right to be represented by informed policymakers
9. We have the right to respectful, nondiscriminatory care from doctors
10. We have the right to treatment and recovery support in the criminal justice system
11. We have the right to speak out publicly about our recovery

For the entire **Recovery Bill of Rights** please visit:

http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/about/campaigns/bill_of_rights.php

[Your full name] is **[Insert your title/affiliation or other role]**.