



Allowing Religious Groups to Provide Housing

Enabling faith-based groups to use their land for charitable housing



Photo by Ron Blunt / Courtesy of MTFA Architecture

WHY YIGBY IS IMPORTANT

In the small town of Bryan, OH, one pastor sought to fulfill his church's charitable mission by operating a shelter for homeless people within the church. However, Bryan policymakers shut down the shelter for violating the local zoning code. Yes In God's Backyard (YIGBY) laws can prevent this sort of situation by enabling religious institutions to help their communities through using their property for housing. Where YIGBY is allowed, housing on faith-owned land is often highly affordable because religious institutions typically offer the housing at discounted rates or even for free. Some of these religious institutions go even further to help families who are living on their property by offering daycare for children while the parents work. This primarily benefits lower income citizens who are struggling to afford housing.

How to construct a YIGBY Bill

There are three essential components to YIGBY bills. The first is requiring local zoning rules to facilitate building types that make multifamily or townhouse construction feasible with reasonable allowance for three-story buildings and at least 60% lot coverage. The second is to keep parking requirements from hindering growth by capping parking minimums to no more than one space per housing unit. The third is to legalize supportive housing and group homes.