



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.

Constructing a Strong Bill

A YIGBY bill should define a base of development rights that applies to almost any property owned by a religious or charitable nonprofit organization statewide. The base rights should facilitate 3-story townhouses and apartments with low requirements for parking. In addition, context-based rules that depend on the site and the neighborhood's built character can expand those rights. Finally, a YIGBY bill should legalize supportive housing and group homes.