

YES IN GOD'S BACKYARD (YIGBY) | FACT SHEET

H.2347/S.1430

TWO LOCAL CHALLENGES...

Massachusetts' **housing shortage and high housing costs** are holding us all back and disrupting our local communities.

At the same time, municipalities across the state are facing **increasingly difficult local budget challenges**. With more tax revenue, rural towns, cities, and suburbs alike could retain their teachers, keep library hours that meet communities' needs, maintain police and fire staffing, and fund road maintenance.

Faith-based organizations across Massachusetts could build thousands of affordable homes on their land, generating millions of dollars in local tax revenue. However, current restrictive zoning makes it difficult. According to a study by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Center for Geospatial Solutions and The Lynch Foundation, if faith-based organizations in Massachusetts efficiently developed a quarter of the vacant land they own for housing, that land could support over 250,000 new homes and generate more than \$30 million in annual local tax revenue.

222K New homes needed in MA by 2035

4,850+ Potentially developable faith-based parcels

250K New homes that could be built by faith-based organizations

...ONE FAITH-BASED SOLUTION

An Act to promote Yes In God's Back Yard (YIGBY) **would streamline the creation of multi-family housing by faith-based organizations**. The legislation would allow the creation of multi-family housing by right on parcels owned by faith-based organizations, providing them with the certainty needed to pursue the development of new homes. Developments would pay local property taxes unless the municipality chooses to grant an exemption.

PASSING YIGBY MEANS...

- **Building the housing we need.** Faith-based organizations deeply rooted in their communities could pursue housing development projects that reflect their communities' specific needs, creating up to 250,000 new homes.
- **Building more affordable housing.** Many faith-based organizations are seeking specifically to build all- or substantially-affordable housing developments.
- **Generating local tax revenue.** Allowing multi-family housing by right on parcels owned by faith-based organizations will help bring tax-exempt parcels onto municipal tax rolls, generating new local revenue that is not subject to Prop 2 ½ caps on municipal revenue growth.
- **Allowing faith-based organizations to continue to serve their communities.** Turning vacant faith-based land into housing can help generate new revenue for faith-based organizations, allowing them to achieve financial stability and continue to offer critical services to their communities.

PAIRING MASSACHUSETTS' SURPLUS OF VACANT FAITH-BASED PROPERTIES WITH THE DEFICIT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS PART OF THE SOLUTION TO OUR HOUSING SHORTAGE.

FAITH-BASED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS HOUSE THOUSANDS IN MASSACHUSETTS TODAY



HILL MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH BOSTON, MA

Hill Memorial Baptist Church was built in 1903 and served the people of Boston's Allston neighborhood for decades. In 2023, after years of declining membership, the congregation's members chose to sell the land and church structure, intending to carry on the good works of the past by working exclusively with the Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation (ABCDC) to create affordable housing. Now, ABCDC and Brighton Allston Elderly Housing are working to use the historic site as a home for 49 low-income seniors and repurposing the historic church structure into a community center to provide a space for local residents to gather.



ROSE HILL MANOR BILLERICA, MA

St. Theresa of Lisieux Parish in Billerica wanted to find a way to use Parish land to provide high-quality affordable housing for local seniors. With the help of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA), a vacant parcel of land behind St. Theresa Church was developed into 41 units of affordable independent housing for seniors ages 62 and older. Twenty-eight units have a preference for Billerica residents. The building is three stories, with elevators, and has a mansard roof and gabled end bay windows.

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FACE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES TO BUILDING HOUSING

For the past four decades, Hartford Street Presbyterian Church in Natick has tried to build affordable housing on its five acres of land. The congregation even pursued a development study which found there was space for up to 30 new homes. But due to various obstacles over the years, those plans never materialized, and the land still sits vacant.

“Many other religious groups would begin to create affordable and working-class housing if the opportunity and a path was created for them. I met recently with members of a mainline Protestant church, inside Route 128, which has only 12 people regularly attending services, but owns 45 acres of land. They met with me to ask how to turn it into housing. I encouraged them to look at their local zoning, and they quickly retreated upon finding out about the zoning challenges.”

KURT LANGE, LEAD PASTOR
East Coast International Church | Lynn, MA

YIGBY LEGISLATION WOULD MAKE IT EASIER

“With this legislation, it would be easier to turn faith-owned properties like ours into housing. That would help deliver revenue for faith-based organizations to put toward our missions, while helping to address the state's housing crisis and give more people the opportunity to build wealth through homeownership.”

REV. KENNETH YOUNG, PASTOR
Calvary Baptist Church | Haverhill, MA