



## **Open New York Testimony for the 2025 Joint Legislative**

### **Budget Hearing on Housing**

**February 27, 2025**

Thank you, Chair Krueger and Chair Pretlow, for the opportunity to share testimony in response to the Executive Budget. My name is Annemarie Gray and I serve as the Executive Director of Open New York. Open New York is an independent, grassroots, pro-housing nonprofit with hundreds of volunteer members across the state.

Housing costs remain the number one burden on New Yorkers' wallets, driving our cost-of-living crisis and demanding bold action. While some of the housing proposals in the Executive Budget, such as the new Mixed-Income Revolving Loan Fund and streamlining of paperwork for small, infill developments, are encouraging, we do not believe that these proposals go far enough.



Open New York is calling on the Legislature to bring strong solutions to the table that really break through the barriers that prevent New York from building the housing it desperately needs. In Florida, for example, nearly 200,000 new housing permits were issued in 2024; in New York, that number was barely 48,000. Only the State can address the root causes that are making New York fall so far behind.

The good news is that there are ready-to-go solutions in the Legislature's hands. The Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act (S3397/A3647) would empower faith-based organizations to utilize their underused properties to create safe, sustainable, and affordable housing options to serve local needs and revitalize neighborhoods. Based on data collected by the NYU Furman Center, we estimate that the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act would create more than 60,000 new homes over the next decade across the state.



New Yorkers from every corner of the state want to see their elected officials take action on housing access and affordability. A recent poll from Global Strategy Group found that 83% of New Yorkers say that we are facing a housing crisis. The same poll found that the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act is not just good policy, it's highly popular with voters – 74% of them support the bill. This support was consistent across regions, demographics, and party lines. Even after respondents were presented with several strongly-worded arguments against the bill, 70% of them were still in favor. Upon learning more about the bill, a majority said that they would be more likely to vote for a legislator that supported the legislation.

We also believe that smart reforms to environmental review practices (S3492) would remove major hurdles to building multi-family housing in an affordable way. New York is one of a handful of states that require housing projects of all sizes to complete extensive, pre-development paperwork that costs



hundreds of thousands of dollars and allows wealthy, anti-housing groups to delay projects for years with frivolous litigation. Building on New York City’s innovative Green Fast Track for new housing, the State Legislature can make infill housing easier to build and less likely to be held up in court for decades by fixing the broken State Environmental Quality Review Act.

Even if we act with urgency to dramatically increase the supply of homes, building the housing we need will take time. Many New Yorkers are struggling to pay rent now, which is why we support an “all-of-the-above” approach to addressing the housing crisis, which includes fully funding the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) (S72/A1704).

We remain committed to working with Governor Hochul and the Legislature to deliver the bold housing solutions our state needs.

Thank you for your time.