



March 17, 2025

Dear Governor Youngkin,

We are clergy and religious leaders from across Virginia. We respectfully urge you to sign HB 2153, allowing localities to make it easier for property tax-exempt nonprofits (the vast majority of which are congregations) to build affordable housing.

There is a shortage of affordable homes in Virginia, both for rental and purchase. Virginia has a shortage of more than 200,000 homes, and more than 900,000 households are cost burdened by their housing. The high cost of housing affects families in every part of Virginia. At the same time, many faith communities want to help. Congregations own land in localities all over Virginia and are interested in supporting their local communities, and much of that land is under-utilized. This bill supports congregations, localities, and families looking for housing.

This bill does three things. Most importantly, it explicitly grants localities permission to create an ordinance making it easier for affordable housing projects on land owned by congregations and other property-tax exempt nonprofits. Additionally, the bill asks localities to consider property tax-exempt nonprofits in their comprehensive plans as partners in addressing the need for affordable housing. Finally, the bill provides suggestions from the Department of Housing and Community Development on strategies for both ordinances and comprehensive plan updates. Each of these components is incredibly helpful in expanding housing from the faith community.

Isaiah 32:18 claims "My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Faith communities want to create these peaceful habitations for our communities. HB 2153 would help us do it.

Please support congregations in living our faith. Thank you.

*The following pages contain the names of 287 faith leader and clergy signatories.  
Clergy's institutions are listed for identification purposes only.*