



**Humility of Mary**  
**HOUSING**

The Caring Compass

**Program Sites**

Emmanuel Community Care Center  
Faith House  
HM Life Opportunity Services  
Opportunity House

Phone: 234.525.6400  
Fax: 330.384.2144  
www.hmhousing.org

**Senior Sites**

St Martha Manor  
St Timothy Park  
St Timothy Manor  
Villa at Marian Park  
St Patrick Manor

March 23, 2021

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and members of the Committee:

My name is Fred Berry, President/CEO of Humility of Mary Housing whose mission is to support and strengthen the self-sufficiency of individuals and families, especially the poor, through advocacy, supportive services, and quality housing. We have been providing supportive housing for the homeless and low income seniors for nearly 34 years to ensure the most vulnerable in the communities we serve have a safe place to call home.

As an organization that recently applied for, and was awarded tax exempt status at five of our sights serving the homeless, the recent decision by the Board of Tax Appeals jeopardizes our current operations to provide permanent supportive housing in four northeast Ohio counties at six sights. This will create a ripple effect throughout our organization that will impact five other sights and 230 households. These housing units simply cannot operate without the tax exemption, which helps keep costs down and rents low. Tenants are extremely low income, or have no income, and without subsidy would be living on the streets or in shelters. Without the intensive services offered through supportive housing, they would be unable to remain safely housed. This is our most important tool in combatting homelessness and we cannot allow it to be threatened. The behavioral health needs of those we serve has increased significantly as a result of the pandemic, and to take away the tax exemption now will be detrimental to the well-being of all we serve.

This testimony is to request your support of the pending amendment to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5709.121 that will preserve a critically important tax exemption that makes possible the operation of permanent supportive housing in Ohio. Permanent supportive housing refers to a housing intervention for individuals and households with disabling conditions who experience or are at-risk of long-term homelessness. This housing intervention is cost-effective and life-saving across the state. There are more than 13,000 units of permanent supportive housing across the state of Ohio.

Numerous studies have found that supportive housing saves money for all public systems to include emergency rooms, jails, psychiatric facilities, public shelters and hospitals by reducing the utilization of these systems by the long term homeless in our communities. One study found the savings to be up to 22% or \$21,000 annually. Stabilizing a person in crisis with housing in tandem with wrap around supportive services connects each household with the necessary supports to maintain that housing long term, while addressing the very issues that lead to their homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing is the solution to the issue and removing the tax exemption will significantly impede our ability to reduce utilization of public systems and provide this solution to ending homelessness.

Humility of Mary Housing urges the Committee to support this legislation. Thank you.

Fred Berry, President/CEO, Humility of Mary Housing

**OUR MISSION**  
Promotes and strengthens the self-sufficiency of individuals and families, especially the poor, through advocacy, supportive services and quality housing.