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House Bill 96 (Interested Party Testimony)
April 8, 2025

Chairman Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Ohio's biennial budget, House Bill 96.

Headquartered in Upper Arlington, Ohio, National Church Residences is the nation's largest nonprofit owner of affordable older adult housing and Ohio's largest nonprofit affordable housing developer. National Church Residences is a 63-year-old nonprofit leader in integrating housing, health care and supportive services, serving older adults of all income levels and their families. We have over 360 communities nationwide and here in Ohio have over 100 communities. Each day our approximately 1,500 Ohio employees serve 11,000 of Ohio's seniors, with more than 8,500 living under one of our roofs.

Like many other states, Ohio is facing a challenge in meeting the demand for affordable and diverse housing options. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Ohio has a shortage of more than 264,000 affordable and available rental homes just for extremely low-income renters, those whose incomes are at or below the poverty guideline. We thank members of the 135th General Assembly for seeking solutions to this shortage through the creation of Ohio's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and Single-Family Housing Tax Credit programs. While both programs are valuable in addressing the housing crisis, additional funding tools are necessary to provide the capital needed to develop additional housing.

In recognition of Ohio's housing needs, National Church Residences has joined with other housing advocates, developers, and industry leaders to support the Home Matters to Ohio platform that outlines several policy recommendations to address the affordable housing crisis. Today, we would like to address a key proposal in that platform, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF).

OHTF provides funding to increase access to affordable housing, fund emergency home repairs, rehabilitate aging housing stock, and support multifamily



housing development. It is an important source of funding in suburban and rural areas that may not be reached through other federal affordable housing programs. Investments from the OHTF over the past 13 years have supported the preservation of six (6) National Church Residences' affordable senior housing communities in Ohio. This investment helped ensure that nearly 500 low-income older adults households continued to have safe, well-maintained affordable homes.

The OHTF is funded by the Housing Trust Fund Fee, which mirrors county fees for recording deeds, mortgages, and other documents. Pooling these funds at the state level leads to a more efficient and strategic allocation of resources to meet needs across multiple jurisdictions. It also provides a centralized and predictable application and funding process for project sponsors and community partners – which helps facilitate efficient and timely housing unit production. Some rural areas, with smaller revenue streams, depend on the collective power of the Trust Fund to make material financial allocations to their area to support larger scale housing initiatives. The Ohio Constitution, Article VIII, Section 16, supports the state's role in coordinating housing development, reinforcing the need for a centralized strategy.

National Church Residences joins the Home Matters to Ohio coalition in asking the General Assembly to protect the OHTF. In the short term, Home Matters further recommends creating a backstop mechanism that would appropriate general revenue to the OHTF to reach the current \$65 million appropriation authority in times when fee revenues fall short. In the long term, we look forward to working with you to find ways to further diversify and expand funding sources for the OHTF.

Thank you for your time today. We would be happy to provide additional information or answer any questions upon request.

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