



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 250 – The Promised Land Act

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

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Before the Ohio Senate Housing Committee

In Support of Senate Bill 250 – The Promised Land Act

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Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Ohio Senate Housing Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of Community Shelter Board in support of Senate Bill 250 – The Promised Land Act.

My name is Níel Jurist, and I serve as Chief Communications and Government Affairs Officer for Community Shelter Board. CSB leads the coordinated response to homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County, administering approximately \$55 million annually to fund a system of care that includes prevention, emergency shelter, street outreach, and housing programs across sixteen (16) nonprofit partner agencies.

While our work is rooted in shelter, our mission has always been housing. We believe that shelter should be rare, brief, and a direct path to stable, permanent housing. That belief is now reflected in our bold 2025–2028 Strategic Plan, which outlines our expanded role as not only a system leader, but also a developer of housing and a regional catalyst.

That is why we strongly support SB 250. The Promised Land Act is a timely, innovative tool that aligns with both our organizational mission and the housing needs across our region. It removes barriers that have long prevented nonprofits from unlocking the potential of their land to create deeply affordable, owner-occupied homes.

Too many Ohio families, particularly those earning less than \$32,700 annually (30% AMI) are shut out of homeownership. At the same time, churches, faith-based groups, and community nonprofits hold

land that could be used to address this gap but lack the resources or financing mechanisms to act. SB 250 bridges this divide by creating a 10% transferable state tax credit for eligible housing projects developed by nonprofits.

This structure achieves three key objectives that we believe are vital to solving Ohio's housing crisis:

1. It builds equity for low-income families.

By requiring owner-occupancy and utilizing tools such as ground leases and deed restrictions, SB 250 promotes not only housing access but also wealth-building through homeownership.

2. It activates mission-driven organizations as housing partners.

The bill recognizes the social capital, and deep community ties that nonprofits and churches bring to the table. It positions them as co-creators of housing solutions, not just service providers.

3. It leverages private sector partnerships without compromising values.

By allowing nonprofits to sell or transfer tax credits, SB 250 creates liquidity that attracts experienced developers while ensuring that nonprofits retain mission control over land use and affordability protections.

Community Shelter Board is currently preparing to launch its own development projects, focused on housing people exiting homelessness. We view SB 250 as a powerful complement to federal programs, such as LIHTC, and local efforts supported by city and county governments. It helps fill critical financing gaps while centering values of equity, ownership, and community empowerment.

As a Unified Funding Agency (UFA) designated by HUD, CSB is accountable for outcomes across the entire homelessness system in Franklin County. But we cannot meet our goals without more affordable, attainable housing. SB 250 is one of the few proposals that directly supports the development of housing with deep affordability, rooted in community-based ownership.

We applaud Senator Reynolds for her leadership in bringing this legislation forward. The Promised Land Act gives nonprofits like ours the tools we need to move from sheltering to long-term housing development. It offers a scalable, Ohio-grown model that we believe can serve as a blueprint for other states.

On behalf of Community Shelter Board, I urge your support for SB 250. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to solutions that address the root causes of housing instability. I welcome any questions you may have.