



**Testimony before the Senate Housing Committee
Senate Bill 250**

**Hazel Remesch, Director, State and Local Policy
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Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on The Promised Land Act (Senate Bill 250). Stable, decent, and affordable housing is the foundation for the well-being for all Ohio families, whether they live in urban, suburban, or rural areas.

My name is Hazel Remesch, and I am the Director of State and Local Policy for Enterprise Community Partners. Enterprise is a national nonprofit whose mission is to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging for all. Together with partners and funders, Enterprise's Ohio Market has helped create or preserve over 160,538 affordable homes for families by leveraging \$12.6 billion in capital across the state. Across the country, millions of individuals and families are struggling to find or remain in desirable, affordable homes, and Enterprise is working every day to solve that problem.

One of our tools is our Faith-Based Development Initiative, launched in Washington DC in 2006. The goal of the Faith-Based Development Initiative is to engage houses of worship who own or have access to underutilized land, help them assess the feasibility and desirability of developing affordable housing or community facilities on that land, and support them through the real estate development process. Through our program, faith leaders are taught the fundamentals of the housing development process. And, after successful completion of the courses, houses of worship are eligible to receive grant awards to jumpstart their housing development concept, including pre-development funding, clergy coaches, and a development consultant to help guide their ideas.

In June of this year, we launched our Faith Based Development Initiative in Cuyahoga County. We are currently hosting two cohort training courses with approximately 40 faith-based organizations over 6 months. At the end of this training process, we will conduct a Request for Proposals to identify six houses of worship from the current Cohort to advance their projects along the development continuum from vision towards completion, providing critical housing for people living on low or moderate income.

Because of our work in this space, Enterprise strongly supports Senate Bill 250. The Promised Land Act addresses key housing needs in our region in a timely and innovative way. By removing barriers that have long prevented nonprofits from unlocking the potential of their land, this legislation will enable the creation of deeply affordable, owner-occupied homes. The bill's 10% state tax credit — transferable and available for eligible nonprofit housing projects — will be a powerful incentive for development.



However, as currently introduced, Senate Bill 250 limits the Promised Land Tax Credit to single-family homeownership development projects. We respectfully urge the legislature to expand eligibility to include multifamily rental housing developments. This change would allow local markets to determine the best use for available land, while benefiting Ohioans who chose not to be homeowners. Expanding the bill's scope will ensure that the Promised Land Act addresses the full spectrum of housing needs in our communities.

Chair Reynolds and members of the committee, your leadership is essential in tackling the complex barriers to housing affordability. By supporting and strengthening Senate Bill 250, you can help ensure that every Ohioan has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Thank you for your commitment and for considering this important legislation.