

Issue brief

The problem

Burdensome and discriminatory zoning and land use policies have created discrepancies in both housing supply and affordability for many low-income and disadvantaged American communities.

The ask

Support the Yes In My Backyard Act (H.R. 3198/ S. 1614), which would incentivize more housing opportunities by increasing transparency of housing and zoning policies that encourage less burdensome regulatory barriers to affordable housing production.

For more information

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Yes In My Backyard Act (YIMBY)

ANALYSIS

Insufficient affordable housing is a problem in every State in America. The challenge is often exacerbated (or created) by local housing and zoning policies that discourage the development of affordable housing, such as requiring large minimum lot sizes or prohibiting multifamily housing as just two examples of many. Whether by design or not, these policies often discriminate against housing opportunities for low- and middle-income Americans.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there are only 37 affordable rental homes available for every 100 extremely low-income renting households, equaling a shortage of nearly 7 million affordable homes nationwide.¹ More must be done to improve affordable housing opportunities for Americans in need. AIA supports access to housing as a fundamental human right and we urge Congress to support initiatives that mitigate against barriers to affordable housing.

THE SOLUTION

Authorize the Yes In My Backyard Act (H.R. 3198/ S. 1614) to encourage greater transparency in the affordable housing market by requiring public housing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients to report their respective housing and zoning policies to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) once every five years. The bill would serve as a disincentive for public housing recipients to maintain discriminatory housing policies since their respective programs will be available for public review and scrutiny.

Additionally, the YIMBY Act would encourage less burdensome regulatory policies at the local level from continuing, which would help lower construction costs and create more demand for affordable housing production. The bill does not require any new policy mandates on part of public housing CDBG recipients, outside of the obligation to submit the report to HUD by the statutory deadline. The bill does not burden the federal government with any new financial costs.

CITATIONS

¹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Rental Homes," March, 2021, https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report_2021.pdf

