



**Written Testimony Submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
2026-27 New York State Budget Housing Priorities and Funding  
On Behalf of Habitat for Humanity of NYS**

Thank you, Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow, Senator Kavanagh, Assemblymember Rosenthal and members of the Joint Budget Committee. My name is Michael Barrett and it's a privilege to submit this testimony on behalf of Habitat for Humanity of NYS and its 29 affiliates who work tirelessly to help low- and moderate-income families realize the dream of homeownership.

I want to begin by pointing out just two articles that were published this past month:

“Why a NIMBY Councilmember Said Yes to Affordable Housing”  
- Nick Garber, *New York Focus*, February 24, 2026

“New York Could Lose Seats in Congress Because It Won't Build Housing”  
- Sam Mullins, *New York Focus*, February 12, 2026

While the present-day challenges of rehabbing and building houses are too numerous to mention here, please let me share a few ways to reverse course to help people remain in NYS.

**Protect Existing Housing Stock** - New York has the oldest housing stock in the country (median 62-67 years). Here's How to leverage that reality to support housing goals:

- Disincentivize hedge fund purchases of housing stock (S1572/A1818) (a moratorium on corporate offers is not sufficient)
- Create a funding stream to help Habitat remediate mold & asbestos in order to increase the stock of starter homes, which will also clean up the environment and reduce the burden on already-stressed landfills by avoiding unnecessary construction and demolition debris.

**Grow Habitat's Capacity to Serve More Low- & Moderate-Income Families (\$3M)**

- Rentals are good, but Habitat facilitates homeownership that keeps people in New York, creates generational wealth, and stabilizes low- and moderate-income communities.
- Habitat's restrictive covenants ensure that homes remain affordable long-term
- Funding will alleviate Habitat's current challenges, which include: (1) prolonged delays of awarded grants that force Habitat to secure revolving lines of credit to stay afloat during extended periods (which destabilizes the network and risks dissolution); (2) lack of administrative staff reduces the number of grant applications submitted and leaves housing funds unused; and (3) lengthy and burdensome environmental reviews.

**Make It Easier to Build - SEQR Reform**

- Gov.'s Exec Budget Proposal/S3492/A6283: Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

**Habitat for Humanity of New York State**

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