

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 249

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON URBAN AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 24, 2021 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Russ Michaels, Executive Director
Texas Inter-Faith Housing Corporation
Houston, TX

House Committee Members,

Texas Inter-Faith Housing (TIFH) is in full support of HB 249. The "90 Mile Non-Profit Board Member Rule" in the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) does absolutely nothing to help local in-state 501c3 non profits such as TIFH further its mission to bring high quality affordable homes with empowerment services to every area of Texas. Rather, this 90 Mile Rule limits TIFH from developing homes and furthering its mission in cities outside of Houston, which is its home city. In other words, this QAP language hurts and harms TIFH and serves absolutely no purpose, nor is the rule anchored to any reasonableness or pragmatism in a competitive 9% program where NUMEROUS other factors determine an application's success. If a Texas non profit organization based in Houston desires to further its housing mission in El Paso, Laredo, Austin, San Antonio, Tyler, Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, etc, then it should be allowed to pursue that mission in those cities and within its home-state totally unencumbered by this useless rule. By voting for HB 249, one is voting to unencumber local non-profits and allow them to operate freely and with 100% ownership of their missions' development endeavors. Again, the 90 mile rule is baseless and absolutely serves no useful purpose at all, but the cost of leaving the rule intact is that local non-profits are unequivocally harmed from developing affordable housing statewide. To that end, TIFH supports this bill and is advocating that this rule be stricken from the QAP. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russ Michaels
Executive Director, TIFH

Jennifer Hicks
self - affordable housing consultant
AUSTIN, TX

I would like to register my support for the changes proposed to the TAC that would remove barriers to allow for national, non-profit developers to compete for funding in Texas for the development of affordable housing. The passage of this bill would assist the State of Texas in the following ways:

1) the major Texas cities (including suburbs) are experiencing an affordability crisis that can only be solved by the production of deeply affordable housing. National nonprofit developers such as National Church Residences and Volunteers of America have a track record of success and experience in developing affordable housing in Texas, but that development has been limited to acquisition/rehab. By removing the barriers solved by HB 249, these developers can also contribute their capacity to the development of deeply affordable, newly constructed housing.

2) HB 249 does not just help national non-profit developers. It will also help those strong Texas-based and homegrown nonprofit affordable housing developers expand their expertise beyond 90 miles. This would allow these groups to bring their best practices in affordable housing development - tried and true in their home cities - to other Texas cities that might be struggling with capacity.

3) Mission-based nonprofit developers are the groups that are serving the most vulnerable Texans whether that be persons with special needs, persons experiencing homelessness, or elderly persons. This is a task in which Texas needs the capacity and help of all the mission-based nonprofits they can attract to the State.

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I have worked my entire career to develop deeply affordable and impactful housing in the State of Texas and am very hopeful of the new capacity that will added to our state by passage of HB 249.