

# Zoning and Land Use Reform

**Pennsylvania Prospects**

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2025 CSG East Housing Summit  
Boston, MA

## **HOUSING IS A HUMAN NEED**

Pennsylvania faces a severe shortage of housing, harming people and communities. Zoning codes have long been wielded as exclusionary frames that uphold economic and racial segregation. Reforming them will preserve communities and support them in growing to meet the needs of residents.

# Pennsylvania's Housing Landscape

Pennsylvania has some of the oldest housing stock in the nation, and hundreds of thousands of homes are in need of critical repairs. Nearly a third of PA households are cost burdened, and an estimated 100,000 homes are needed to fulfill current needs.



## HELP NEIGHBORS REPAIR THEIR HOMES

Whole-Home Repairs Program provides grants to low- and moderate-income homeowners to repair and upgrade their homes while building a local workforce.

## SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO BUILD HOUSING THAT MEET THEIR NEEDS

Curtail prohibitive land use restrictions to allow communities to build the numbers and types of homes they need.

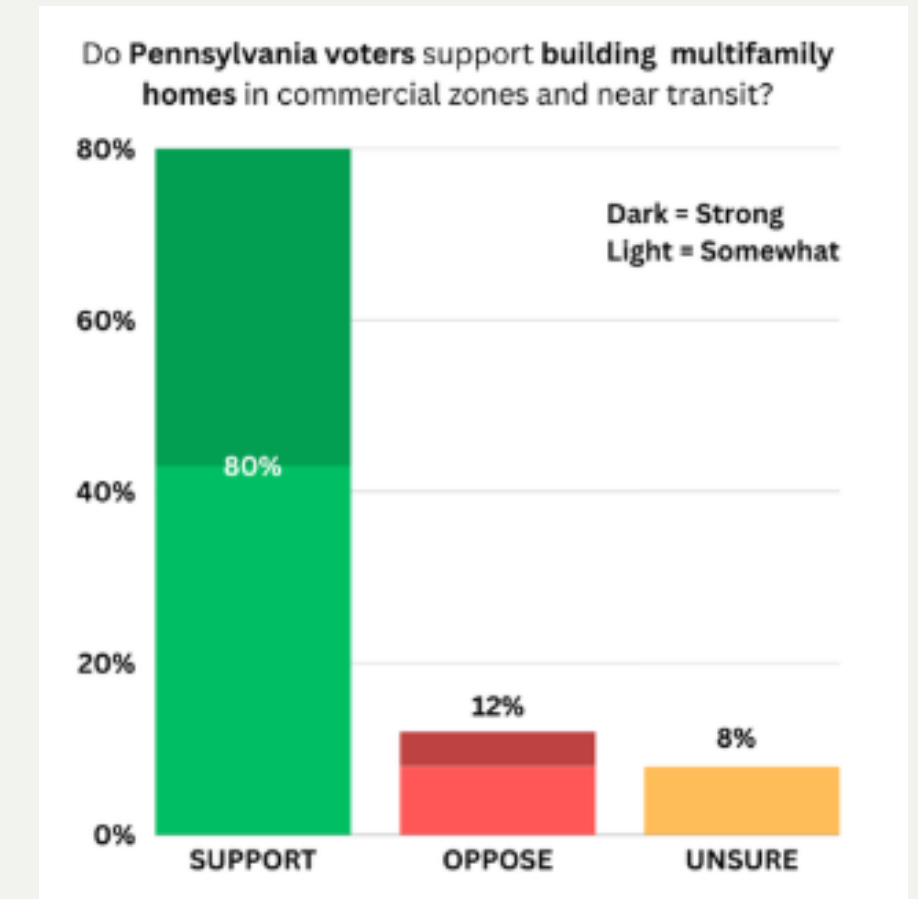
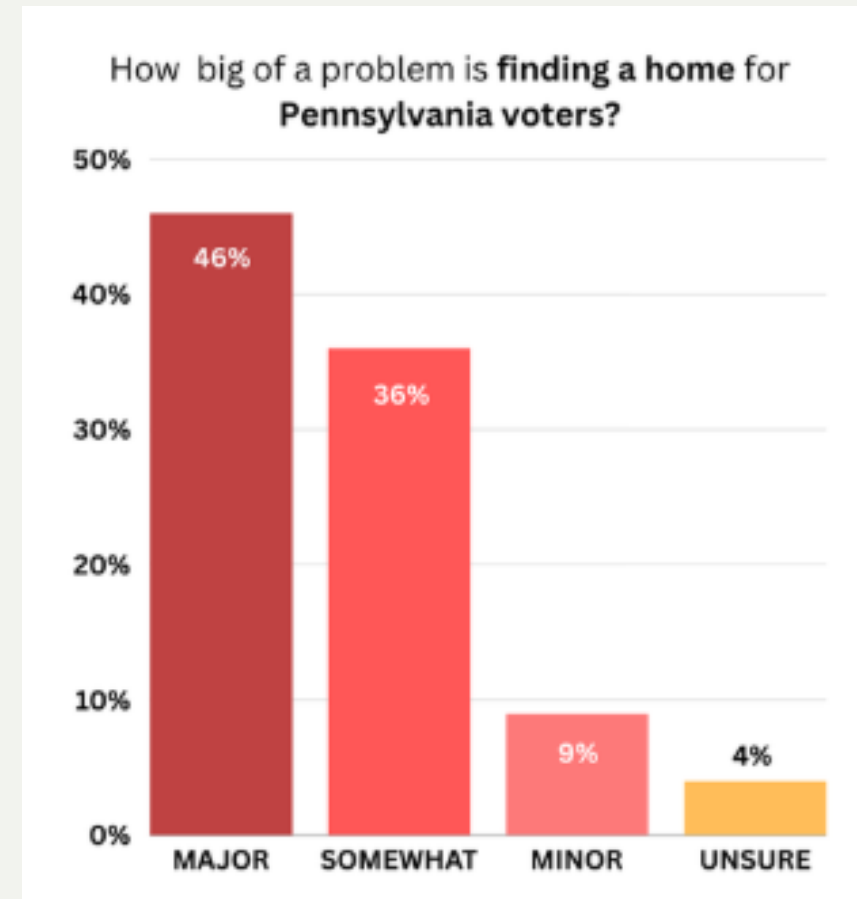
## EASE ACCESS TO EXISTING HOMES

Pass protections like eviction record sealing legislation to remove the barriers that keep Pennsylvanians from finding safe, healthy homes that they can afford.

# Pennsylvanians Want Homes

**ACROSS THE COUNTRY**, polling from **Data for Progress** and the **Center for American Progress** showed that 77% of voters, including more than two-thirds of voters across party lines and demographics, agree there is a housing shortage and the country needs more homes and rentals.

**IN PENNSYLVANIA**, polling from **YouGov** and the **Pennsylvania Housing Choices Coalition** showed that 82% of voters view the cost of buying or renting a home as a problem and 60% of voters prioritize building more homes and bringing down costs over preserving city governments' power to determine where and what types of homes can be built.



Polling conducted by YouGov in April 2024.  
Graphs created by the Pennsylvania Housing Choices Coalition.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY THROUGH LAND USE REFORMS

# Senate Bill 1126

- Reduce parking space requirements
- Limit minimum lot size requirements
- Legalize duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in single-family zones, dependent on a town's population size.
- Legalize manufactured homes and ADUs in any place zoned for single family, detached housing.

Framed as a means of offering defensible limits on local zoning regulations and restoring the rights of private property owners to create affordable alternatives and encourage the development of communities that Pennsylvania residents want and at prices they can afford.

## The Philadelphia Inquirer

### Pa. zoning laws are strangling home construction, and lawmakers want changes

Politicians and interest groups from across the ideological spectrum are pushing for changes to boost housing construction in areas where people want to live.



The legislation proposed in Pennsylvania  
homes by legalizing  
Shafkat Anow

# Charting a path forward

## **Kickstarted an important conversation around zoning at the state level.**

The growing national and state-level awareness of the supply problem has created a unique coalition of supporters for land use and zoning reform, including housing rights advocates, planners, and builders. PA's Department of Community & Economic Development has also called attention to the role of these policies in inhibiting affordable housing.

## **Revealed an important area for bipartisan collaboration on housing**

The housing crisis is felt in every county and every community in Pennsylvania. Legislators are united in a shared desire to meet the needs of their constituents. As we look to cultivating legislation for the current session, representatives on both sides of the aisle, and in both legislative chambers, have indicated support for components of the previous bill.

## **Opened a crucial dialogue among supporters and opponents**

The introduction of new homes in communities invites important reflection on how the state can support long-term residents and preserve existing homes. For example: in dense urban neighborhoods, community members are traumatized by the damage caused by unscrupulous building practices.

# Menu of Options

Creating points of agreement and action.

By legalizing homes of all shapes and sizes, especially in places with existing infrastructure and public transportation, Pennsylvania can improve residents' quality of life, grow more jobs and stabilize communities, reduce costs and pollution from long commutes, reinvigorate older walkable downtowns and suburbs and cultivate new community hubs and town centers.



## Accessory Dwelling Units

Allow building on existing lots without requiring additional land. Can be built as detached structures or within the existing home.

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## Streamline and Reform Municipal Permitting

Allow for clear and timely local decisions on the development and use of land.

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## Multifamily Housing in Commercial Corridors

Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings where infrastructure exists, establish guidelines for municipalities to craft ordinances for multifamily dwellings.

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## Missing Middle

Give residents more choices in the types of homes available and to increase missing middle housing incrementally through light density

# Protecting Neighbors and Communities

A suite of legislation focused on upholding good practices and standards around the construction of new homes.

Protections for renters and homeowners alike are needed to help prevent displacement (caused by soaring prices and gentrification) and the loss of existing homes.



## Adjacent Neighbors' Bill of Rights

Mandates that all neighbors be informed of their rights and the recourses available to them if these rights are violated.



## Amending Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act

Requires the "house flipper" be considered an "owner" and to live in the home for a year following construction



## Continuing Education for Construction Code Officials

Enhances continuing ed. to include illegal and faulty construction practices and adds the AG as an entity capable of providing this education.

# Thank You!

Stay in touch and stay  
tuned ...



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