

3/10/25

Honorable Legislators,

Re: Starter Homes

SF 2229 (Senators: Port, Rasmusson, Boldon, Draheim)

HF 1987 (Reps: Igo, Howard, Mekeland, Kraft, Rehrauer, Coulter)

This letter is in support of Starter Homes, with other considerations to make housing more affordable:

- 1) Starter Homes in the 1960s/1970s included:
 - a) Small ramblers, some with basements to finish, others with no basement. Some with garages, some without. Rooms, bathrooms, dining area, kitchen, living room were small.
 - b) "Cabins", usually with no basement and were more like efficiencies and 1 small Br.
 - c) Small Efficiencies and 1 Br Apartments, later called "condos".
 - d) Townhouses with small bedrooms, kitchen, dining area, living room.
 - e) Mobile homes
 - f) RVs on lots and house boats where basics were small and compact.
 - g) "Leasehold" for 99 years instead of "fee simple".
 - h) Zoning allowed for more housing and housing options, with less land area requirements.
 - i) Cities built, owned and managed long-term affordable housing instead of money now going to private parties who profit from government funding the construction, rent, fix-ups, and ownership. They also profit from the appreciation.

These were a step up from smaller college dormitories, small college housing units, room rentals by the "YMCA", and rooms for rent in an older person's home.

The "tiny home" market has shown how designs could be better, despite the small and compact spaces. Even Amazon, Walmart and others were selling "tiny homes" one could build themselves.

- 2) Anyone getting into rentals, owning their own homes, or otherwise being housed – need to go through financial and home maintenance education and training – if they have not yet had the education and training. This is not usually taught in schools, so many have learned things by up and down experiences, getting into trouble, over their head in debt, etc. What is taught by "housing counselors" – is insufficient. There should be other methods of getting the education and training needed. Home Heroes Legacy legislation in process, is intended to offer other methods.
- 3) Expansion can happen after a person has worked years and built up enough funds to do housing expansions, even if expansion happens over time. Too many young people think they can buy a home like their parents moved up to, without taking the steps necessary to start small and work their way up. Some people feel entitled to be given housing without doing anything on their part to earn it.
- 4) The real question is how to house people who can't work because of disabilities, infirmities from aging, and other real reasons. Children and youth are not being considered in this mix, since there are other options for them. All others can work, including some taking on more than one job. With financial and maintenance education and training, they can earn enough and save enough to have and maintain a residence.

Other comments may be added later.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lee, Pres., Exec. Dir. (PC for JL)

Children's Hope Intl/ R & R Family Ctrs

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