

My name is Lauren Hawk. I am a member of the St Johns Church which is connected to the Multnomah County Cohort of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, an interfaith coalition of faith communities leveraging our land, resources and community power so that all Oregonians may come home.

After my mother left my alcoholic father when I was a toddler, my family experienced a season of housing instability, including periods of staying with family members. We eventually found affordable housing in North Portland, where we connected with neighbors, schools, and a local faith community. Because of that community stability, I and my family are rooted in North Portland, where we live and work and learn and grow together.

30 years later, many in our faith community and neighborhood have similar stories but have been displaced due to rising housing costs and a lack of affordable housing in our neighborhood. We also have seen the growing crisis of homelessness and there are several folks camping outside of our church building today. We have worked to partner with local organizations that support transitional housing. However, when people move out of that transitional housing, they are too often displaced from our neighborhood and the support networks they have built. This creates community instability, which affects all of us.

My faith community, and others like it, envision a future where community based organizations like ours can build affordable housing on our land, to see people stay and live and thrive in and contribute to their neighborhoods, to see folks transition out of homelessness while remaining members of their own communities, but there are so many barriers that exist that slow down our action. SB 8 helps to alleviate those barriers and open up pathways for creative solutions like ours that will help alleviate this housing crisis we are facing and create healthier and more stable communities.

Your action is crucial. Please approve SB 8 so that faith communities like mine can build affordable housing with as few barriers as possible, so that we can become part of creating healthier and more stable communities, so that we can see all Oregonians come home.

Respectfully,

Lauren Hawk