

Dear Senator:

The New York Landmarks Conservancy has serious concerns with the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act. (S7791/A8386)

We recognize the issues facing congregations across the City and State and we support the goal of creating affordable housing.

The Conservancy's statewide Sacred Sites program has given almost 1657 grants totaling \$14 million to help preserve religious institutions of all denominations. We have encouraged religious institutions to reuse former schools and convents as housing and build appropriate development on vacant land they own.

But the bill's language suggests that landmark religious institutions would not be subject to regulation by the City Landmarks Preservation Commission. While the bill does "not require the alteration or demolition of landmarks," it could encourage the demolition of landmarks, especially for religious institutions that do not own vacant land.

Additionally, attorneys we have spoken with have questioned whether singling out religious institutions is constitutional.

We know full well the need religious institutions have for additional financial support. But development has and is occurring now following LPC approval. There is no need to weaken the City's Landmarks Law to promote new affordable housing.

We urge you not to support this bill.

Thank you.

Peg Breen, President

The New York Landmarks Conservancy