



**Testimony
HB 3177-Funds for Affordable Housing
House Capital Budget Committee
February 8, 2010**

My name is Josephine Tamayo Murray. I am here this morning on behalf of the Washington State Catholic Conference, which represents the Catholic bishops of Washington State on issues of public policy. The Catholic Conference respectfully urges you to support the passage of HB 3177.

In this economic downturn we believe that Washington State should invest in building affordable housing units to meet the ever increasing needs of low income individuals and families. For the past 20 years Catholic Charities and our Catholic housing authorities have used the Housing Trust Fund with other public and private resources to build low-income housing for the most poor and vulnerable people in our state. The Trust Fund has supported the building of transitional housing and permanent housing communities for homeless adults and families, elders, people with disabilities and farm workers.

The State Housing Trust Fund is a needed resource to leverage the city and county housing levies. In some areas of the state there are limited resources to leverage with the Housing Trust Fund making the Trust Fund as a resource more critical to building affordable housing in those areas.

I also want to speak about the Housing Trust Fund budget proviso for Communities of Concern. I thank you for last year's \$5 million appropriation to build low-income housing units in underserved communities. Underserved communities of concern are those with high levels of poverty, specifically 30% of the local median income; and whose members disproportionately suffer chronic homelessness or lack of affordable housing. Underserved communities include veterans, immigrants, refugees and those communities of color disproportionately impacted by chronic homelessness.

The \$5 million set aside in the Housing Trust Fund last year funded pre-development costs for housing development in urban Indian, Latino and African American communities. We ask that you set aside \$10 million in the Trust Fund this year.

The Washington State Catholic Conference respectfully urges your support of HB 3177, and the budget proviso for the underserved "communities of concern" in order to continue our state's housing efforts so badly needed in our communities at this time.

Thank you for your consideration.