

First I would like to thank the General Assembly for listening to a private citizen's perspective on Senate Bill 1024. My name is Carolyn Audino and I live in Fairfield. While this particular bill is well intentioned, much of its contents and language are truly concerning.

Zoning regulations should remain solely in the control of each individual municipality. One size does not fit all when you are talking about 169 different towns. Local planning and zoning commissions exist for a reason. These boards are comprised of individuals that have deep knowledge about the towns they live in. They are the most qualified to make land use decisions with respect to the unique characteristics of their towns such as historic areas, environmental issues, wildlife habitat, topography and infrastructure constraints. These are pertinent issues that a legislator sitting in Hartford would never know about. State mandated zoning regulations negatively impact communities and its inhabitants.

When you're talking about zoning, civic engagement is also a key component. The "as of right" language is an offense to CT's "home rule" doctrine – municipalities should be dictating their own land use regulations and policies. Residents know their neighborhoods best, what works and doesn't work. The public hearings process, much like the one we are having right now, allows for the dissemination of information that only local residents would know. Information sharing is critical for all stakeholders and allows for adequate consideration of concerns.

In my town, there are several high-density developments on the horizon that could have a devastating impact on the environment and public safety. These impacts include building large lots on identified wetlands, severe runoff and inland flooding that compromises the health of the Mill River and Long Island Sound, as well as exacerbating traffic safety concerns on a road that has seen over 100 accidents on a 1.3 mile stretch of a purely residential street (not near any major thoroughfare). In the absence of qualified local commissions to advocate for the best interests of Fairfield, who else will protect the well-being of those directly impacted by over development of land?

Thank you and I encourage you all to vote NO on any zoning bill that usurps local decision-making rights.