

To: CT General Assembly Planning and Development Committee

From: Carol Booth, New London, CT

Re: SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, ect.

Date: 13 March 2021

Chairman Cassano, Chairwomen McCarthy Vahey, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you as an example of what what passage of SB 1024 might look like on the street—my street. Timely passage of this bill would serve also to enhance life on my block in important ways.

In 2007, I chose to retire in New London after living in a university town for 30 years. I bought a small, story and a half house built in the 1870's. It is one of four small houses on a block containing large Victorian duplexes from the 1890's. The block is at the downtown terminus of a long street and borders one of the highest crime sections of New London. There are home ownership and rentals in equal measure. It is an active block. On a summer evening, competing music can create a cacophony—ranchera, soul, modern jazz, and hip-hop—from multi-generational groups having fun. But other times are not so peaceful: an afternoon where local and state police, supported by ATF, arrived to arrest a neighbor, break up a drug ring, with eventual prison time involved; or the night when local police, long guns drawn, were active around a Section-8 rental.

Over the decade of living here, relationships have developed with my neighbors through proximity, shared interests in survival, and self-interest. While this last year has brought my white privileged status into high relief, the diversity of this block allows for a richness and level of understanding the comes naturally by living our lives adjacent to each other. I feel safe here, though not always comfortable.

My street is the future of our country if legislation like SB 1024 supports places like mine. We need laws that are equitable, support zoning reform, and diverse types of housing, among other conditions. Wealthy communities need help to achieve what poverty has created for me.