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Planning and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106
3/12/21

With regards to Raised Bill 1024,

While I agree that affordable and safe housing for all citizens is an important goal for governments at all levels, I believe that local governance should be the first and best approach. It's at the local level where stakeholders who are already invested in a community can find solutions to this very complex problem. 1024 appears to be a very blunt tool, wielded from afar, which will do more harm than good.

There should not be a "one size fits all" approach to this problem in Connecticut. The issues surrounding affordable housing vary depending on the area in the state, the size of the municipality, and the proximity to employment centers. In rural towns, this might mean small houses on small lots near the center of town. In established suburban environments, this might mean the encouragement of accessory dwelling units, and "apartments over retail" or other sensible developments in the town center, near public transit. In established cities it might mean larger building forms and perhaps brown field revitalization. All of these solutions should be arrived at locally, after careful consideration.

This was a difficult bill to parse through for a layman, but as far as I can tell, it would strip local zoning boards of the power to regulate many types of development, as higher density would be allowed "by right" under very loose parameters that revolve around "main thoroughfares" and "public transit". The predictable outcome of this would be rapid overdevelopment in desirable towns, with mostly market-rate units. Local resources would be strained and taxes would go up. Developers would walk away as winners, very few families will actually end up in affordable housing, and current property owners would be adversely impacted. There seems to be no consideration of current density, historical districts, topography, parking, or any other practical considerations that one might apply to any development. It truly appears to be a "father knows best" top-down control placed on all of Connecticut's 169 municipalities.

I am very proud of my town's efforts in creating affordable housing solutions. We currently have several developments built under the existing 8-30g statute, as well as a HUD-sponsored property. There are several proposed developments that include affordable units. We are putting updated guidance on accessory dwelling units into our Plan Of Conservation And Development. And there are many small properties owned by private landlords that are rented at very reasonable rates.

I urge you to reconsider this misguided and blunt legislation.

Sincerely,

Harry Clark