

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Connie Cooper, Sandy Hook

Re: SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Date: March 15, 2021

Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Committee:

I support SB 1024 because it is data-driven zoning reform that will expand affordable housing and assist in resolving Connecticut's status as a highly desegregated state.

As a retired CT public school teacher with experience in both suburban and urban teaching environments, I can testify to the difference in these two environments. My suburban experience revealed the detriments from a lack of exposure of our youth to a diversified environment. My urban experience was a peek into the value of diversity and the need for equity to strive for positive change, as well as the negative that can result from denial and stagnancy. In the not-so-distant future we will live in a majority minority country. If we don't embrace reform of our zoning laws as a step toward desegregation, we are complicit in a negligence to prepare society for the possibility of acceptance, unity, and opportunity. We all must set personal bias aside. To those to whom the following statement applies: "Zoning should be kept local to preserve the character of our town," please stop thinking or saying that. It is code for keeping your town predominantly white because of your personal bias in favor of whiteness rather than a vision and acceptance that all people of all races have equal value.