

We oppose Bills SB 1024 and HB 6613, and any other legislation that would reduce or eliminate local control over zoning and development.

Local autonomy is a cornerstone of our State and has served the State very well over time. It is one of the reasons why Connecticut is an attractive place to live. It gives each town and city its own unique character.

A critical part of local autonomy is local control over zoning and development. This is true for all aspects of development, not just affordable housing. Increasing centralized State control over local zoning and development is profoundly and fundamentally undemocratic.

Each town and city has a unique population, and has its own infrastructure, public education, environmental conditions and other features and needs that are best managed by that locality's government and people. "One size fits all" mandates from Hartford with respect to affordable housing over which localities have no control are not likely to work better than local solutions — in fact they will certainly make things worse in various ways. Among other things, they will derail and disincentivize local attempts to provide local affordable housing solutions. Taking away local decision making also will devalue property, hurt tax revenues, clutter streets and adversely affect the character of local neighborhoods — none of which will ultimately serve the long-term goal of enhancing affordable housing. A reduction in local control also is likely to destabilize local school systems and give rise to potentially severe environmental problems. For example, in Greenwich, where we live, there are areas of town where the sewer systems are already over-taxed. As another example, Greenwich has extensive wetlands protection regulations that would be over-ridden by "one size fits all" affordable housing mandates.

In closing we would note that Greenwich Communities (formerly the Greenwich Housing Authority) has successfully developed and manages numerous affordable housing units, and that there are initiatives under way to increase affordable housing in Greenwich. We trust our neighbors and our elected leaders who understand and care about our town and its people to increase affordable housing in ways that meet the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

John and Winifred Curry