

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Daniel Dollar, Town of West Hartford

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

Date: March 13, 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 am writing in support of SB 1024. Zoning laws structure housing patterns in our towns and communities. Smart zoning reform as outlined in this bill holds the promise of addressing a wide range of essential societal issues involving racial equity, educational opportunity, affordable housing, economic growth, and environmental health.

I come from a white working-class family who were able to build wealth through home ownership. They, like many other white families, achieved this in part thanks to public policy and legislative decisions, including zoning laws, that helped my family afford a home while also exacerbating racial disparities. The resulting creation and transmission of generational wealth has served as the foundation for me and my family to have an upper middle-class existence, living the past 22 years in West Hartford. My spouse and I, and our three children – one in college and two in high school – have greatly benefited from West Hartford's excellent town services and public schools. Unfortunately, there are many who are denied these benefits because they cannot afford to live in West Hartford due to restrictive zoning laws.

Zoning reform, as proposed by SB 1024, offers a path to expand housing opportunities for those who have been excluded from places like West Hartford due to a legacy of racial discrimination and segregation. This reform will also serve to improve quality of life for all of us through more diverse communities, greater opportunities, less urban sprawl, and increased tax revenue.

I urge support for smart zoning reform through passage of SB 1024 to create more abundant and diverse types of housing across the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Daniel Dollar

Daniel Dollar
51 Oak Ridge Lane
West Hartford