

From: Kathleen Finnegan, Darien CT

March 15, 2021

Dear Planning and Development Committee:

I write in support of SB 1024 for the following reasons:

- There is demonstrated need in the state of CT to develop new housing options for the state's residents, be they young college graduates, retired individuals, low-income earners, or single adults and beyond.
- As a progressive New England state, CT communities do not represent the racial and economic diversity of our population, mainly due to policies relating to zoning.
- Our state cannot function or thrive without equity and diversity. Just look at the goals of Sustainable CT to see a vision of thriving communities and a thriving state.
- The proposals in this bill make small steps to remedy the demonstrated needs to retain our population and attract young and bright minds to the state.
- The fear-mongering that SB1024 would take control away from local communities is misinformed and patently false and arguments about ruining the character of a community speak more to fear of change and fear of "the others" than to an understanding of the overall needs of our families, rich and poor, black, brown or white. I know this as a resident of an exclusive community that too often uses its political voice to fight change and keep people out.
- My own children, aged 23 and 26, are well-educated, successful students from the opportunities they had in the Darien Public Schools. Unfortunately, they are part of the CT brain drain, unable to return home to live due to lack of any affordable housing options for young artists and educators. There is tremendous irony that while choosing to stay in New England, they are both living in Rhode Island, where they can reasonably afford housing and enjoy a better quality of life than in CT!
- Towns like Darien should not be exclusively for the privileged who have already "made it".

SB 1024 offers thoughtful, reasoned, researched approaches towards a better future for all CT residents, and does not take away anything from those who cry wolf and offer fear and opposition.

Thank you so much for considering my testimony.

Kathleen Finnegan, Darien CT