

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Joel Freedman
213 Tryon St.
South Glastonbury

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

I am a proud native of Hartford. I was born a few years following World War II on Garden Street and spent my early years on Albany Avenue in public housing before my family relocated to South Windsor. Since then, I have lived in many of the lovely suburbs ringing Hartford but have always returned to the capital city for work and play.

But, what if I had been born outside Hartford? Where would my family have lived? Few veterans could afford single-family houses in the 1940s and early 1950s, just as many hard-working Connecticut residents cannot afford them now. Why is it that many towns surrounding our core cities have few multi-family dwellings forcing those who cannot afford single-family houses to remain in the core cities?

Connecticut is one of the most diverse states in the country, but it is also one with a unique geographical history. Unlike nearly every other state with county or regional government and zoning regulations, Connecticut has 169 local, independent governments consisting of thriving, central cities such as Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. We also have dozens of former industrial hubs from Danbury to Danielson and from Enfield to Groton. Like the larger cities, these small to midsize cities have individual zoning regulations and the suburbs surrounding them have divergent ones.

Regionalism with its efficiencies and partnerships is essential to Connecticut's future. Lacking structural regionalism, zoning modernization and equity are crucial. Otherwise, many will be unable to escape from large and small urban areas that are the main supplier of multi-family opportunities.

SB 1024 is a start to ultimately reward both those currently in core cities and those in ring suburbs and rural areas with improved economies and quality of life. Without legislation, Connecticut and all its residents will find it difficult to compete with other states.