

Dear Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairs Needleman and Goupil, Ranking Members Hwang and Zullo, and members of the Planning and Development Committee,

My name is Timothy Gabriele. I am a resident of North Haven, CT and I am testifying to communicate my enthusiastic endorsement of SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land Use Officials, and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems.

The high cost of living in Connecticut is detrimental to the people expected to work, spend, and raise families in our communities. Archaic zoning laws have essentially created an income barrier to owning property in select towns. SB 1024 helps correct this by allowing the building of multifamily housing units, smaller dwelling units in larger single-family properties, and eliminating public hearing burdens.

I've personally known a number of people who've moved out my hometown, some who've even been residents their entire life, because of a lack of affordable housing options. These exclusionary tactics, whether intentional or not, reinforce notions of white supremacy in majority white suburban towns like North Haven by ensuring that our children do not go to school with diverse populations; that we do not hear the stories of neighbors from a multiplicity of backgrounds; that the bulk of interactions with minorities for many residents is through consumer interactions where minority workers service white customers; and that our insular communities are peppered with anecdotal and inflated stories of out-of-towners committing crimes. This, ironically, has a major impact on the "character" of the community. In North Haven, this has meant mobs forming to make threats against minority student-lead rallies against police violence, an Instagram page set up to share stories of racism experienced in the schools, and native families speaking out against our insensitive school mascot.

SB 1024 will not solve these issues, but by allowing historically disadvantaged populations a chance to share in the advantages and privileges of well-established communities it will tie everyone's success together. It will encourage building bonds and bridges. Most importantly though, it will give the working class the option to live in the neighborhood and development of their choosing, something that shouldn't be tied to income thresholds. The model codes within SB 1024 will even help redress any concerns (though usually in bad faith) on cosmetics and "character".

I hope the committee and Connecticut lawmakers agree that SB 1024 should be considered for a vote. I support its passage with an enthusiastic wish that these units come to my suburban neighborhood. I thank the committee for their time.

Sincerely,
Timothy Gabriele
North Haven, CT