



Testimony in Support of SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Dear Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

My name is William Garcia. I am a resident of New Haven and am testifying to convey my strong support for Senate Bill 1024, *An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems*.

Historic redlining and exclusionary zoning policies have amplified racial and economic inequities in Connecticut for generations. Currently, single-family zoning dominates Connecticut, allowed on 90.5% of zoned land while 3+ family housing is allowed on only 2.5% of zoned land, mostly concentrated in urban areas with large non-white populations. Legal obstacles such as large minimum lot sizes, minimum parking requirements, restrictions on accessory dwelling units, and historic character standards block multifamily and affordable housing in many localities. These regulations not only limit housing supply, but they also fail to encourage development near transit centers and main streets, hurting the local economy and contributing to expansion into natural areas.

Based on extensive research, we know that zoning reform will create more housing, which in turn will reduce the cost of housing overall. It will also form a more diverse housing stock, consequently responding to the modern needs and desires of housing from society at large. Even more importantly, it will protect the Connecticut we know and love by saving farmland and forest from destruction. This bill is nothing but beneficial to the economy and crisis state of housing that is existent in Connecticut currently.

In my own experience, I've seen how zoning regulations can profoundly negatively impact marginalized communities. This is prevalent in Connecticut. For example, 100% of the areas redlined in CT in 1937 were classified as "lower opportunity" areas in 2009. Is this really representative of the social mobility that America is supposed to embody? Furthermore, CT's wealthiest zip code is in Weston, a town that is 95.75% white; the state's poorest zip code, in Waterbury, is about 70% BIPOC population. This enormous disparity and the association between socioeconomic status and race needs to be addressed by legislative action.

SB 1024 is a crucial step toward desegregation and promoting housing equity in our state. Expanding and diversifying the housing supply to meet the needs of all Connecticut residents is critical to remedying racial inequalities, encouraging economic growth, and protecting farmland and natural areas. Thank you for your consideration, and I hope you choose to support SB 1024.

William Garcia
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