

Planning and Development Committee – Public Testimony March 15th
SB 1024 An Act Concerning Zoning Authority
SB 172 An Act Encouraging a State-Wide Assessment to Encourage
Affordable Housing in the State

March 14, 2021

Dear Committee Members and State Legislators:

I appreciate your time and efforts for our State. It's a daunting task, undertaken by only a brave few. Thank you. As a long-time local advocate, only recently have I followed housing issues at a higher level. I understand that it can be difficult to achieve progress for all if we remain in local silos, weighed down by local details. But it can be worse when localities are literally bulldozed under by theoretical and academic theses.

I take issue with certain premises that these bills – and too many more like them – are built on.

1. They count only the supply of certain kinds of housing: rental apartments. **And will destroy the housing options and displace the residents in the path of these bills.** Last week, I met more than a dozen 2-family owners in Fairfield. The majority live or have lived in one of the units while providing naturally occurring affordable housing to others for decades. These HOMES don't count as 8-30g because they are too old and the paperwork burdens associated with mandated affordability requirements is too burdensome for an individual owner. The apartments become fashionably obsolete and the small investor, co-resident loses her home, forced to sell to the big developers who will demo and build a shiny new complex where only he will move up the income ladder and be a property owner.

2. They ignore people. I want all people to count. The sole focus on rental rates in approved buildings ignores lower income residents already living in our communities. Advocating for seniors, I know MANY of our long-time residents are well below AMI levels and would qualify for 830-g housing, but these bills ignore these people; in fact, the bills call them out as the “exclusionary single family” owners who prohibit others from living in their towns. Some of the MF owners I met with are seniors; many have accents from around the world – Latin/South America, the UK, Asia and the Bronx.

Please consider who and what these bills will be building over and vote NO.

Respectfully,
Catherine Giff
Fairfield CT