



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Support

H.B. No. 6611 'AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OTHER POLICIES REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT'

S.B. No. 1024 'AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING AUTHORITY, CERTAIN DESIGN GUIDELINES, QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN LAND USE OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS'

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Hwang, Representative Zullo, and members of the committee, my name is Kiley Gosselin, and I am the Executive Director at the Partnership for Strong Communities. We are a statewide nonprofit policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness, expanding the creation of affordable housing, and building strong communities in Connecticut.

The last year has heightened awareness of racial and economic disparities our state has been ignoring for many years. The disparate impact of COVID-19, eviction, and job loss on communities of color, recognition of the role systemic and institutional racism has played in the planning and development of our towns, and increased calls for racial equity following the events surrounding police brutality have sparked conversations around housing inequality and exclusionary zoning practices in areas of Connecticut that have been segregated for generations. Connecticut needs more homes for more people in all our towns. Connecticut's towns can be great places to live and can also be more affordable.

We respectfully request the committee support to S.B. 1024:

This bill includes a series of essential land use reforms, including:

- Legalizing accessory dwelling units in all single-family zones
- Encouraging transit-oriented development with towns choosing 50% of an area within ½ mile of transit for 4+ unit housing
- Encouraging Main Street housing with towns choosing 50% of an area within ¼ mile of the main street for 2-4 unit housing





- Developing model codes for buildings and streets by creating guidelines towns can choose to adopt to improve and clarify decision making
- Requiring annual training for land use commissioners, including on fair housing and environmental issues

All Connecticut residents will benefit from these inclusive land-use reforms – a necessary first step in a very complicated unravelling of a complex, expensive zoning process. These strategic, well-researched changes to our land use laws will put Connecticut in a better position to provide more safe, affordable homes near jobs, education, and other resources – supporting a more equitable, economically strong society.

We support the goals of H.B. 6611 to provide for an assessment of the need for affordable housing and an allocation of the need to planning regions and municipalities resulting in affordable housing planning and zoning goals for each municipality as well state support to meet affordable housing needs. This is a model the State of Connecticut should explore adopting. A similar model of assessment has been in place in New Jersey and has contributed to the creation of tens of thousands of units of affordable housing in that similarly high-cost housing state.

We know that Connecticut’s high housing costs are a driver of its economic stagnation. Housing options, affordable at a range of incomes, are critical to attracting businesses to Connecticut, allowing CT families to free up income for other critical needs, including health care, food, and education expenses, generating a pathway to middle-income stability. A fair share system in Connecticut communities can use thoughtful planning and zoning to unleash the market’s ability to generate mixed income housing with affordable units and play a foundational role in launching a new wave of economic growth for the state while guiding their own destinies.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

