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CT General Assembly Planning and Development Committee

C/O Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Committee

State Capital
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear CT General Assembly Planning and Development Committee:

I write to you today in support of SB 1024.

I support this legislation for three reasons: it will bring equity to the state of Connecticut, it will help the state's economy grow, and it sets up a promising future for the state.

I teach in Westport, CT currently and have also taught in Hartford, CT. I have seen first-hand the horrible effects our de-facto segregation has upon our communities. We have children in poverty are that stuck in conditions no American should live with. We also have wealthy children who are entirely separated from their fellow citizens. Children in poverty deserve the chance to move to cleaner, safer, and more secure environments. Better housing near transportation will also increase the economic opportunities for their parents. As to the wealthy children I now teach, they too will benefit from seeing a more diverse student body than we currently have- and by that, I mean diversity of identity but also economics.

Secondly, our state's economy is stalled because we only create housing for the wealthy and the impoverished. Our state's middle class is increasingly squeezed. We need a release valve for many of our fellow citizens who don't want to take an extremely expensive mortgage, but who also don't want to live in an area of extreme poverty. The housing promised by this bill- including housing accessible to transportation- will create the much-

needed middle ground our state needs. It should not be a choice between affordability with violence vs. crippling debt with safety.

My personal story, while not as extreme as my argument above, is the case in point. My wife and I had to leave our apartment in Trumbull, CT in 2012 because the rent we were going to be asked to pay became so expensive that a monthly mortgage payment was cheaper than the monthly rent. That seems to be an absurd situation. Now, luckily, we had the wealth and credit history to get a mortgage and now happily live in our house in Stratford, CT. But what about persons working who don't have wealth built up or who have struggled with credit? There should be affordable housing so that young persons can rent as long as they need until they are on a steady financial footing before getting a mortgage. I believe this bill will help accomplish this goal.

Furthermore, the type of housing promised in this bill is the type of housing that our growing millennial population wants. So not only will this help our middle class overall- but it will keep our talented young people in our state.

Finally, I support this bill because of the promise it holds for creating environmentally friendly development. One of the favorite activities I have is to go to the State Parks of CT with our family. I would hate to see that land lost to development. I also drive daily to Westport along I-95. This is not an enjoyable commute. I would much prefer to be able to take an easily accessible train or bus to get to work. Unfortunately- there simply is not enough housing near our train station. One needs a car in CT just to get to mass transit, for future residents- we should fix this problem- which I believe this bill will do.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Heaphy