

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Ben Kalfas, Newtown, CT

Re: SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Date: March 15, 2021

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

I am writing to voice my support for SB1024. I think it is vital to improve the diversity of housing available in Connecticut. Zoning restrictions based on outdated, third order problems have the direct result of reinforcing racial and socio-economic barriers that make many parts of Connecticut exclusive to the wealthy.

I cannot think of reasonable justification for minimum lot sizes or required parking spaces, or bans on multi-family housing. It seems targeted at excluding poorer people for fear of property value dips. If residents fear developers running wild and building on every inch of land, I am sure there are plenty of other zoning rules to keep them in check. If people really want homogeneous housing they can move into a gated community with a heavy HOA contract. That level of insanity should be the exception for small groups of people, not the rule for everyone.

If we want to walk the talk of diversity and inclusion, start by making it just as easy to build an affordable apartment as it is to build a lavish mansion. I've seen plenty of mansions that I think ruin the aesthetics of a town, but I really don't think it's my place to say they can't build them. Odd how that only seems to work in one direction.