



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

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 Aparajita Kaphle. 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.

Connecticut must make addressing zoning restrictions a priority in advancing equity and bridging the wealth gap among low income and black and brown communities. I strongly urge the state to pass this legislation which is rooted in real empirical research conducted by Desegregate CT. The data, while daunting in describing the rampant segregation present in Connecticut, also points to the fact that change is very much possible. Passage of this bill will not only create more housing, thereby reducing the cost of housing but also lead to the creation of a more diverse housing stock.

Poverty exists in Connecticut under racial lines. Connecticut's wealthiest town, Weston is 95.75% white whereas the poorest town in Waterbury is 70% Black and Hispanic. These statistics are not coincidental. With discriminatory redlining practices, the zoning laws within the state is detrimentally impacting the livelihoods of black and brown neighborhoods. Housing is a large indicator of societal growth and mobility and in choosing not to reform zoning, we will be perpetuating the cycle of poverty within low-income neighborhoods. Passing sensible reform is a

step not only to a more equitable and fiscally progressive housing market but is also a significant step in addressing racial divides.

SB 1024 is crucial toward desegregation and promoting housing equity in our state. Expanding and diversifying 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.

Aparajita Kaphle