

Thank you for having me today. My name is Steve Kennedy. I am a Fairfield resident and the President of the People's Parity Project at UConn Law. You have had testimony from so many experts on this issue, so aside from expressing our organization's support for SB 1024, I want to focus in on an issue that is personal to me. I have to push back against the idea that building multi-family housing destroys the character of towns like Fairfield. When I had just graduated college after leaving the Army and my wife and I were starting our family, we loved Fairfield, but there is no way that we could have afforded to buy a home here at the time. We moved into a four-family home to get a foot in the door. It was a group of five or six four families on a cul de sac in a quiet little neighborhood in the beach area, and it was mostly young families like us, a lot of them recent immigrants as well. The three buildings on our side of the street all shared our three big yards, and our kids would play back there together; there were always kids and families up and down the streets—it was a beautiful neighborhood. It was the house that we brought our oldest kids home to, and we loved it. And you know what? When developers started buying up all of the little cape houses down the street to put up giant McMansions that took up the whole lot, no one made a peep. The people talking like allowing more four families would destroy the character of the town were nowhere to be found then because that kind of housing, which did destroy the character of the neighborhood, brought in the right kind of people. After getting our start in our four-family house, we were able to save, and now we do own a home in Fairfield, and that is true of a lot of the people that we lived with. I want more people to have the opportunity that we did, and I think that this bill is a good way to make that happen.