

TESTIMONY:

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 Lauren LeClaire. 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.

Zoning laws in Connecticut dictate how our communities are built. Zoning reform is essential in helping CT reach its full potential. Current exclusionary zoning practices are blatantly racist. It is no coincidence that 100% of the areas redlined in 1937 were categorized as “lower opportunity” areas in the year 2009. These practices result in situations we can visibly see. For example, even though white children are the majority in CT, the poverty rate for white children sat at 5.5% while Black and Hispanic/Latino children comprised almost 60% of the 2016 metric. Every citizen of Connecticut deserves adequate housing and opportunity, which is what SB 1024 will provide. Educational and economic opportunities will spread to those who are low-income and non-white. These results are backed up by other states’ experiments in similar bills such as in Oregon (HB2001) and in Virginia (HB152)

SB 1024 is a crucial step 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.

Lauren LeClaire
New Haven, CT