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**TOWN OF SHERMAN CONNECTICUT  
MALLORY TOWN HALL**

March 17, 2021

Dear Senate Chairman Cassano, House Chairwoman McCarthy-Vahey, Ranking Senator Hwang, and House member Zullo:

Please add my voice to the loud chorus of boos for the proposed Senate Bill 1024 and House Bill 6613. While there is no question that affordable housing is an important issue in Connecticut, as is affordability in general, these bills marginalize, and in some ways, eliminate the local zoning control critical to each Connecticut municipality's success.

For Sherman, our local zoning has not only held back urban sprawl but it has achieved far reaching positive environmental effects on land and water for our region. Some of you and your colleagues might argue that staving off urban sprawl is somehow an exclusivity that we don't deserve. I would argue that each Connecticut town is special in its own way: there is a proper distinctiveness to each Connecticut town and the state offers a wide variety of towns and municipalities in which to live. This is something Connecticut does right. It serves no purpose to tear down what is right with the far-flung hope of fixing something that some of you perceive as wrong.

Furthermore, these one-size-fits-all bills do not fix the problem. Instead they threaten already tender local economies, devalue property, raise taxes, weaken our environment, and will further drive both retirees and young working age people away. Anecdotally, my 25 year-old son still lives with my wife and I and our high school senior daughter. My son is smart, engaging, has a Bachelor's degree earned with Dean's list grades from UCONN, and works every day at a steady part-time job (and other part-time jobs) that allows him to cover his bills. But it is not enough income for an apartment or a house. He doesn't have an affordable housing issue; he has a "can't find a decent full-time job" issue. I know countless others of his age group in the same shape. As much as he loves Connecticut, we will soon lose him and others like my son to other states that have more to offer when it comes to full-time work.

With regard to affordability, Sherman is doing its part by keeping our property taxes affordable – rare in this state. We have lowered taxes 3 years in a row now and our taxes have decreased by 8% in these last 3 years. We do this, in part, to make our cherished Town an affordable locale for people to move to -- another positive aspect of local control.

I respect all of you and I know how challenging public service work is. There is no doubt that each one of you is trying to do the right thing. However, if I may, I wish the members of the General Assembly of both parties would put a full-court press on this state's economy and focus on bringing jobs to this otherwise rich state. That would solve a multitude of problems in the organic way that truly solves problems.

Thank you for letting me testify and for all that you do for our good state.

Don

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