

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 Isabella Marin. 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 relates to housing but also to racial injustice. Connecticut is one of the most segregated states in the US, which stems back to redlining policies. 100% of the areas redlined in Connecticut in 1937 were classified as “lower opportunity” areas in 2009, demonstrating the current effects of older racist policies. These poorer - or lower opportunity - areas correlate with largely non-white populations. Connecticut’s wealthiest zip code is in Weston, a town that is 95.75% white. The state's poorest zip code, in Waterbury, is about 70% Black and Hispanic. Even though the majority (57.5%) of Connecticut children are white, in 2016, the poverty rate for white children was 5.5 percent, 28.3 percent for Black children, and 31.3 percent for Hispanic or Latino children. People of color disproportionately face poverty and live in lower-opportunity areas that can be traced back to redlining policies. This bill can help alleviate these injustices.

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.

Isabella Marin
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