

TESTIMONY ON SB 1024 AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING AUTHORITY, CERTAIN DESIGN GUIDELINES, QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN LAND USE OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS.

Testimony by: Nathanael McLaughlin/Town of Marlborough

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via email to pdtestimony@cga.ct.gov

To Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Distinguished Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Nathanael McLaughlin, and I am honored to testify in strong support of SB 1024.

I write to you today as a father, a veteran, a member of my town's Zoning Commission, and a Policy Fellow for DesegregateCT. I live in the Town of Marlborough with my wife Sara, an incredibly talented special educator, our beautiful baby Olive, and our two dogs: Maggie & Delilah. We are proud Connecticut residents with deep roots who want to see our community thrive.

As a Policy Fellow for DesegregateCT, I have had the privilege to work side-by-side with some of the most incredibly dedicated individuals and organizations working to make Connecticut a more just, equitable, and welcoming community. For my part, I was drawn to DesegregateCT and the idea of statewide land use reform in no small part based on the incredible energy of the Black Lives Matter movement and my work in Mayor Elicker's office centering on issues of housing and the reimagination of public safety. This work made two things clear to me: 1. The incredible damage that segregation continues to do to the people and communities of Connecticut and 2. That housing is at the core of what people need to thrive.

At the same time, I live in the Town of Marlborough. Marlborough is a picturesque rural town of just over 6,000 residents nestled around Lake Terramuggus. Marlborough is also a predominantly white town with over 94% of [Marlborough is zoned](#) for single family housing while Accessory Dwelling Units are restricted through special permitting processes, multifamily housing is only allowed (by special permit) in ~2% of the town, and only 2% of Marlborough's 2,100 homes are [deemed affordable](#). In other words, I live in a beautiful lakeside town with zoning laws that need to change. To this end, I joined my town's Zoning Commission as an alternate with the aim of making Marlborough a more equitable and inclusive place to live.

As a veteran, I believe deeply in the importance of stepping up to serve the communities that I love. As a father, I cannot help but think about my daughter's future, the community she will grow up in, and the sorts of opportunities she will be afforded. I want my daughter to grow up and to go to school in a diverse and equitable community, one in which she experiences the humanity of people of all backgrounds and walks of life. I want my daughter to benefit from all the beauty and opportunity a place like Marlborough offers but not at the expense of excluding others. This is the bare minimum that I feel I owe my daughter and my community. This is why I've devoted what time I can toward desegregating the state starting with the town I call home.

SB 1024 represents a powerful first step toward making Marlborough more inclusive and welcoming. By eliminating barriers to the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units, SB 1024 empowers homeowners in Marlborough to build this type of naturally affordable housing. SB 1024's commissioner training provision will build the knowledge base of the incredible volunteers who step up every month to make

difficult and complex decisions about how best to use land in Marlborough. And SB1024's provision on model codes will create an incredibly valuable tool that Marlborough will be able to leverage as we plan for our collective future.

Ultimately, I support SB 1024 for very personal reasons. It is clear that SB 1024 should be signed into law because Connecticut is one of the most segregated states in the country and SB2014 will do much to unwind that segregation. But it is also clear to me that I want my daughter to grow up in a community that values diversity and equity. A community that recognizes the importance of having safe and affordable homes and strives to provide all its citizens with an abundance and diversity of housing to meet their needs. I owe it to my daughter, and we owe it to each other to support SB 1024 as an important step toward desegregating Connecticut.

Sincerely,
Nathanael McLaughlin