

COMMENTS ON SB No. 1024:

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

As the former Town Planner for three towns in Connecticut over the past 30 years, and as someone who worked as a housing advocate in two others, I fully support SB 1024.

The sacred cow of “home rule” is being exploited by politicians who are out of step with the times and, in fact, out of step with their own constituents. “Home rule” is being touted to justify Connecticut’s use of local zoning to perpetuate racism and segregation. It is no accident that CT is one of most segregated states in America.

I’m not a politician looking to curry favor with voters, so I am not afraid to say that “community character” is a myth. Worse than a myth - it is code for “we don’t want those people living in our town”. I heard that from politicians when I worked in Bristol decades ago, and I heard it in Newington just a few years ago.

If I plunked you down blindfolded in any of the three towns I worked for, you would have no idea which one you were in. Allowing apartment buildings at reasonable locations is not going to change the character of any small town. It would, however, transform Connecticut’s segregated landscape.

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