

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Ranking Members Hwang and Zullo, and Distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I'm writing in support of S.B. 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems.

This bill provides many benefits to towns like Brookfield, where I have lived since 2001.

As Chair of the Brookfield Democratic Town Committee, I play a key role in finding people to run for and serve on our Land Use Boards. One of the most important questions these volunteers ask is, am I qualified? We work hard to pair these volunteers with experienced board members both during the campaign process and once elected. Mandatory training is critical for people in these roles who want to serve their communities but often lack the skills and expertise to do the job out of the gate.

I moved to Connecticut having grown up in what I now know is a rare community where diversity and inclusion were the norm. It was years before I learned about the government sanctioned segregation in mortgage policies and red lining that yielded the lack of diversity we continue to see across Connecticut (and the country) today.

S.B. 1024 will address many of the structural issues that will provide a more diverse Connecticut. This benefits us all.

A clear definition of "character" which pertains to buildings and not to people is necessary as communities welcome new development, particularly affordable housing. Allowing multiple types of housing such as accessory dwelling units and making changes like capping or eliminating requirements for parking spaces can help us move away from the idea of big apartment buildings that require large parking lots - a perceived negative for many towns.

The changes in S.B. 1024 will benefit the environment. Our obsession with large pieces of land for single family homes as **the** way to live requires that we develop more unused land and drive our cars farther at a time when we should be looking at how to stop taking up so much undeveloped space and take advantage of public transportation.

The efficiencies and advantages of S.B. 1024 are good for so many reasons. I encourage you to support this bill and thank you for your time.

Thank you.

Laura Orban
Chair, Brookfield Democratic Town Committee
95 Stony Hill Road, Brookfield