

March 15, 2021 Testimony - Planning and Development Committee

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Manny Santos, I'm a CT taxpayer, an engineer and analyst, and former mayor of Meriden.

The best government is one closest to the people, local government.

HB 6611 and HB 6613 (and several other bills, including SB 1024) undermine local zoning authority, while purporting to encourage affordable housing, but are gimmicks to strong-arm suburbs and small cities into building more affordable housing. Have you ever questioned why CT needs so much affordable housing? Maybe because it's no longer affordable to live in this state... because of too many regulations on businesses that create jobs and too many taxes. Stop making it so darn hard to live and work in CT and the "problem" of housing affordability will solve itself.

When I was in office, I fought to stop more affordable housing in Meriden, because that only addresses the symptom, not the root cause. After building hundreds of additional apartments, Meriden is no better off... because we still lack businesses to employ people, and our median income is now lower, so people have less disposable income, further reducing the likelihood of attracting businesses, restaurants, shops, etc., which all provide jobs. We can stop this vicious circle, but only with more jobs; not these bills.

One major potential negative component is the so called "as of right" provision in SB 1024, which essentially eliminates any serious local opposition to multi-family apartment buildings in residential neighborhoods, simply because they are within 1/4 mile of a commercial center.

Everyone acknowledges that the local community knows their town best, so why remove any zoning control from the very people that have the most stake in it and understand it best? Most towns are well run; it's the state government that's a mess. Don't bring that same mismanagement to the rest of CT.

Make CT more affordable: reduce state spending, reduce taxes and reduce regulations. Create more jobs, not build more affordable housing or take away zoning control. I urge opposition to HB 6611 and HB 6613 and SB 1024... we don't need to undermine local zoning control.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Manny Santos
Meriden, CT