

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Rachel Taylor, Hartford

Re: SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Date: March 16, 2021

Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Committee:

I urge you to support SB 1024.

I grew up in Hartford in the 1980s and 1990s and attended the Hartford Public Schools throughout my primary and secondary education. I was an elementary school student when *Sheff v. O'Neill* was filed, and remember the vitriol directed at Hartford students by some suburban residents through op-eds and other media. The sense of separateness and differentness— and the barely disguised racism that underlay it— was palpable and disturbing to me, even as a child. I also remember, as I got older, being shocked by the resources and opportunities my friends at suburban schools took for granted that most of my classmates at Hartford Public High School could only imagine.

I moved back to Hartford almost two years ago, with my young family. My oldest son is now in pre-K at a Hartford magnet school. I find that the magnet schools have brought some improvement to the gulf between the suburbs and the city. And yet, fundamentally, schools cannot be expected to bear the responsibility of creating a smarter, more equitable, more diverse society. We need our towns to live up to the promise of our children. We need housing laws that make clear that Black and Brown and Native lives are valued in Connecticut as much as white lives; that people with low incomes and middle incomes are valued in Connecticut as much as high incomes; and that all of us benefit when zoning laws are clear, thoughtful, and based in both equity and history, as are the proposals in front of you.

We cannot be an equitable state without being an integrated state. We cannot be a thriving, dynamic, 21st-century state without being an integrated state. The proposals in SB 1024 have been needed for a long time. Please, take this opportunity to help our state move forward.

Sincerely,
Rachel Taylor
Hartford, CT