

TESTIMONY ON S.B. 1024

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

via email to pdtestimony@cga.ct.gov

By: ***Yanil Terón, Executive Director, Center for Latino Progress – Ct Puerto Rican Forum
March 15, 2021***

Dear 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:

On behalf of the Center for Latino Progress- CPRF, I am testifying in support of SB 1024. Thank you for the critical discussion on this bill and for allowing me to testify.

Since 1978, the Center for Latino Progress, known as the Puerto Rican Forum is a partner in building stronger communities and celebrating our Latino community's strength, vitality, and potential. Our mission is to advance the community's socio-economic conditions at large, emphasizing on Hispanics through education, training, supportive services, leadership development, and advocacy. We understand that a strong economy helps businesses and communities thrive and that supporting the people who power the economy is key for their quality of life and ***our shared future***. We seek to break barriers that prevent us from advancing by providing training to help adults become workplace-ready, build leadership skills and financial literacy. We offer youth development programs, college and career training, affordable legal immigration services, and civic education to empower our community about issues blocking them from their American dream.

We also advocate for local and national legislation on behalf of the Latino community's best interest and ***that of our children's future***. We believe the proposals on SB 1024 will decrease barriers that artificially have separated our communities (BIPOC and anglo whites) from their dream neighborhood and affordable properties. We, the people of Connecticut, need to lessen this burden.

We advocate for a more economically healthier and equitable state but to achieve it; first, we need to deal with our current zoning laws because:

- [60% of Black and Hispanic CT residents cannot afford fair-market rent](#)
- [Connecticut has the second-largest gap for homeownership rates between white and Latino residents](#) (76.1% versus 34.1%)

- [Single-family detached homes are more likely to contain higher shares of White residents and lower shares of Black and Hispanic residents.](#)
- [Connecticut is the Second Worst State for Hispanics to Live:](#)
 - Median income for white households is more than \$39,000 greater than that of Hispanic households— an enormous gap of any state other than neighboring Massachusetts.
 - 26.5% of Hispanic state residents live in poverty.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

The proposed bill makes Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) easier to be built throughout the State. We support this proposal because it:

- Provides more affordable/inclusive housing options for low-income renters. ([53.7% of Hispanic/Latino renters are cost-burdened in CT](#))
- [Diversifies housing stock](#) to fit the varied needs and budgets of individuals and families.
- Increases property values ([up to a 50% value increase](#))
- Helps homeowners to generate additional income by renting the ADU in their property.
- Increases population density in the area, bringing more jobs, higher productivity, and cheaper provision of public services and housing.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

The SB 1024 proposes to accommodate statewide housing demand by modestly increasing density where it already exists. Furthermore, we increasingly support this proposal because it requires 10% of the housing units to be affordable on 10+ unit developments. This will help us deal with [the State's affordable housing shortage](#). We also support this proposal because:

- Increases housing availability in high opportunity areas with easy access to jobs and services and without the need for a personal vehicle.
- Increases population density in the area, which provides more affordable housing options for low-income residents.
- Foster distinctive, [attractive communities with a strong sense of place](#)
- Encourage infill and redevelopment (through transit areas), which provide opportunities for greater social and economic mobility.

Commissioner Training

The **SB 1024** also proposes to provide mandatory commissioner training, and we find it imperative for commissioners to be trained on fair housing law, affordable housing practices, and the history of discrimination that has marginalized Latino communities in CT because:

- It saves money to our State that could be spent more efficiently elsewhere (such as in labor development programs)

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- It improves our zoning laws to align with our values and prevent unequal impacts such as discriminatory practices.

Connecticut, the eighth oldest population in the nation, cannot afford to leave the youngest population behind in less desirable environments and cannot continue perpetuating inequities due to provincial and antiquated zoning laws preventing mobility from their residents. SB 1024 will reduce the outflow of the young adults and professionals moving (of all ancestries) out due to the lack of affordable housing and support aging seniors interested in living in affordable cities and town centers. It is time to change the landscape of our State for the benefit of our shared future. Gracias, for your consideration, leadership, and support of SB 1024.

Sincerely,



Yanil Terón
Executive Director
Center for Latino Progress – CT Puerto Rican Forum