

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: The Rev. Heidi Thorsen, New Haven, CT

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

Date: March 15, 2021

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

Dear Planning & Development Committee,

I am writing to express my support for SB 1024. As a pastor in the City of New Haven, this bill exemplifies my Christian values for care of the earth and all the people who live in it.

I love my city. Nevertheless, I have grown increasingly aware over the past year of how current zoning laws have enabled the segregation of New Haven into different neighborhoods clustered by race, income, and access to public amenities. I dream of a day when my neighborhood, East Rock, is as diverse as the City of New Haven. I dream of a day when affordable housing units and SRO apartments are just as available in my neighborhood, as in other areas of the city. I dream of a day when I don't have to drive to a warming center at 7pm at night in a neighboring municipality to pick up one of our church members, who is homeless, and put him up for a hotel for a night because the warming center was too full, and 211 is unequipped to rapidly rehouse or even shelter a fifty year old man who was living out of his car for months, before even that option became unavailable to him.

Zoning Reform is a necessary step towards making *every* neighborhood more livable for every person. I believe that Zoning Reform will not only improve the lives of people who are marginalized or have limited resources; it will also improve the lives of people with considerable privilege like myself. We will build stronger, more diverse, healthier neighborhoods with the guidance laid out in SB 1024.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Heidi Thorsen
Assistant Rector
Trinity Church on the Green
New Haven, CT

