



Making Great Communities Happen

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

Testimony regarding

Proposed Bill No. 5229 – AN ACT DEFINING “ADVERTISING SIGN” FOR THE PURPOSES OF MUNICIPAL ZONING REGULATIONS

CCAPA opposes this Proposed Bill. While we support revisions to CGS §8-2 to provide clarity to municipalities in the establishment of Zoning Regulations, the addition of a definition of “advertising signs” is not the right change. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* provided guidance to municipalities on sign regulation. In brief, the Supreme Court prohibited municipalities from regulating signage differently on the basis of **content**; all signage had to be treated essentially equally. An advertising sign must be treated equally with political or ideological signs, and not be given more stringent (or different) standards about size, manner of placement, etc. Since that time, municipalities across the country, including in Connecticut, have been seeking to update their signage regulations to comply with this standard. Municipalities can still regulate elements of size, height, location, and illumination, but these regulations must be content-neutral.

Instead of providing for a new definition of “advertising sign” in CGS §8-2(a), we would recommend removal of the word “advertising” as an adjective and making this clause read: “...and the height, size, and location of signs and billboards.” This would both re-affirm a municipality’s ability to regulate signage and eliminate any incongruity between this section of the Statutes and the *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* ruling.

WHO WE ARE

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) has over 420 members who are governmental and consulting planners, land use attorneys, citizen planners, and other professionals engaged in planning and managing land use, economic development, housing, transportation, and conservation for local, regional, and State governments, private businesses and other entities. CCAPA has long been committed to assisting the legislature and State agencies with developing and furthering responsible growth management principles. The APA is an independent, not-for-profit, national educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities.

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