

**Planning and Development Committee Public Hearing
Testimony on SB 1024, HB 6107, HB 6611**

Thank you, Chair McCarthy Vahey and Cassano and ranking members Hwang and Zullo and all esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Consistent with efforts to regionalize education and create a state-wide property tax, there are multiple proposals designed to eliminate ‘home rule’ and local zoning rights by giving Hartford the power to establish state-wide zoning laws.

These proposals are misguided at best, and a naked power grab at worst. Instead of common-sense, market-driven solutions to provide diversified housing, overseen by locally elected and accountable representatives, Hartford politicians would issue state-mandated decrees and control local zoning.

Many towns have developed zoning strategies that increase affordable housing. Darien has enacted inclusionary zoning laws. If a developer wants to build more than five units, 12 percent of them must be below market rate. New Canaan has established a fund of developers’ fees to sponsor additional affordable housing. Fairfield has a Housing Trust Fund to invest in affordable housing and has adopted inclusionary zoning laws requiring developments with more than 10 housing units to set aside 10% of the units as affordable.

If you expect every town to use “cookie cutter” legislation and eliminate public hearings, you will be helping change, if not destroy, the wonderful diversity that exists from town to town, and county to county. After all, Pomfret is not like Stamford, and Old Lyme is not like Bridgeport. Encouraging those municipalities who do not have a plan in place makes far more sense than empowering the state to dictate what the rules and regulations should be. Earlier today Sen. Slap said that multiple housing was good for the towns that encourage it. Well, if it so good, why aren’t more municipalities writing their own rules to make those changes?

I fully expect you to vote No on every piece of legislation that strips municipalities and the residents of those municipalities of their rights, and gives local decision-making rights to a state or regional body. And I expect you to speak out publicly against this movement that will fundamentally change home rule. I look forward to your reply, and to your no vote.

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