

I am writing to express my serious disapproval of bills H.B. 6611, H.B. 6612, H.B. 6613, S.B. 1024, S.B. 1026, S.B. 1027, H.B. 6107.

First and foremost, I am in favor of providing affordable housing availability to all. Secondly, but of no less priority, I insist on maintaining zoning rules that have already been put in place by all municipalities. Zoning & land-use are carefully thought-out and eternal plans that are designed to provide guidance to future development. One cannot make decisions on their basic legal right of where to purchase a home or property if one cannot depend on the eternal nature of surrounding land use. Do not take that fundamental expectation away from a basic legal right.

We can provide affordable housing that meets current zoning laws even in a town like Woodbridge. The state can subsidize single family homes to those qualified, if desired. I have personally worked on Habitat For Humanity single family homes in Hamden so I know this can be accomplished by the state. Do not allow bills to be passed that will force multi-family buildings to be built in single family home, semi-rural neighborhoods. It is simply inappropriate, unnecessary, and unreasonable. STOP STATE OVER-REACH!

BIGGER PICTURE — to quote Francis Pickering, Executive Director of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments, from his Feb 18, 2021, letter to the Housing Committee Chairs:

"Legislative action is not needed. Most of the concepts under discussion can be implemented without the need for additional state legislation and, in fact, are increasingly being adopted by municipalities. For those that are not yet, a conversation based on data, discussion, and mutual respect may be a better approach than force. One should not underestimate the soft power of education.

In regional discussions, it became apparent that it would not be possible to create a one-size-fits-all for the region, let alone for the state. While municipalities can and do learn from each other, such learning often does not take the form of copy-and-paste. For regulations to work well, they need to be adapted to local conditions. Rather than push out regulations top-down and hope they work everywhere, it is better to support local efforts that actually do work — per the adage “think global, act local.”

With these principles in mind, I urge the General Assembly to support and strengthen local democracy, recognizing that decision-making processes that involve a community, whether in the form of school boards, civilian review boards, or planning and zoning commission, are the best way to create lasting and effective, community-wide movement toward important public goals.

IN CONCLUSION — Local zoning and land use decision-making is better than state-wide mandates. Stop this state over-reach.

Thank you for your consideration.

Roger Hess

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