

Public Comment of Stephen M. Hudspeth of Wilton, CT to the Planning and Development Public Hearing #4 on March 14, 2021

Dear Committee Chair and Members:

I write to comment on S.B. 1024, S.B. 1027, H.B. 6107, H.B. 6611, and H.B. 6613.

Richard Rothstein's seminal work, *The Color of Law*, documents in exhaustive and excruciating detail the vast and pervasive role of our government at all levels (federal, state and local, and in the North as well as in the South) in imposing by law explicit, brazen & demeaning racial segregation on American society with segregation in housing extending to segregation in schools given school districts' delineation by local municipality. Hence, segregation permeated all aspects of our society. For more than a century, this *de jure* segregation across all states, including our own, has been carried out under both Republican and Democratic administrations; no one can credibly deny that responsibility for it is very widely shared.

So now the key question becomes how to rectify this longstanding evil. The reflexive (and very understandable) reaction is to respond in kind: attempting radical transformation through harsh new measures imposed pervasively on municipalities and enforced by draconian sanctions for non-adherence. But is that the strategy that presents the best way forward – the one offering the greatest likelihood for overcoming so much deplorable government action, as well as individual action, over so many years?

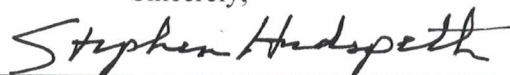
I respectfully submit that it is not. That kind of approach runs the risk of creating deep bitterness in both the short term and the long run where instead there should be satisfaction (and, dare I say it, even joyful celebration!) in righting the wrongs of the past by moving forward in new and productive ways. A negative approach also runs the risk of creating intense resistance that will only serve to slow progress and to assure that a significant portion of our populace believes itself to be reconfirmed in its very sad intransigence to what is absolutely necessary change in segregation outcomes extending over generations.

So how can we move forward in the positive way that is most likely to produce what we want and need: a more racially inclusive and just society? Let me suggest six key thoughts on best strategy:

1. Be open to encouraging instead of commanding: find carrots instead of sticks.
2. Set objectives willing municipalities can accomplish on their own, without outside intervention.
3. Give municipalities appropriate time to ramp up to your newly set objectives.
4. Find ways to encourage public/private partnerships between municipalities and developers.
5. Follow the model used in Sec. 8-30g: if you as a municipality meet a clearly defined goal (*e.g.*, X% of housing is affordable), you will be allowed full local autonomy; however, also include significant consequences ("legislative fangs") if the municipality doesn't: *e.g.*, other public housing agencies can step in with housing in a municipality that doesn't meet the goals set.
6. Ramp up going forward over time the percentage of affordable housing (10%) & the time it must continue (40 yrs.) from Sec. 8-30g levels for a new development to be counted towards qualifying a municipality for meeting the goal for exemption of that municipality from the legislative fangs.

Many will say, "We've waited long enough!" and they are certainly absolutely right. But the real question for government is: how do we best move forward to where, for the good of us all, we need to be?

Sincerely,



STEPHEN M. HUDSRETH

6 Glen Hill Road, Wilton, CT 06897; 203-762-2846