

Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I stand in firm opposition to the following bills.

HB 6107, HB 6611, HB 6612, HB 6613, SB 1024, SB 1026, SB 1027

These bills would undermine local control of zoning. Simply put, the volunteers who make up the zoning boards across CT know our towns the best, far better than policy makers in Hartford. These individuals are elected to make decisions in the best interest of the residents of the tax paying citizens in each town. While the stated purposes of these bills are admirable, they are a steep over step. Policymakers in Hartford can not possibly know the complex environmental, safety, and infrastructure concerns new developments impose on our communities better than our local zoning boards. I find the notion that our zoning is "racist" quite frankly offensive. As a life long resident of Simsbury I remember my elementary school class was entirely white, save a few students bussed in from Hartford. I see my very same elementary school today as a a far more diverse environment, and I see far more diversity in my neighborhood than existed 30 years ago. We are making great strides in this area, and we have done so by being a desirable place to live. Simsbury is desirable because of the work the volunteers on our zoning and land use boards do. I implore you, do not take that away from us. If you must take action, use our town as a model for towns struggling with accomplishing the goals of diversity and affordability. Encourage towns to make efforts as we have.

Thank you for your time,

-Jason L. Levy
Simsbury, CT