



## OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

**Michael R. Criss**  
**First Selectman, Town of Harwinton**

### ***HOUSING COMMITTEE***

February 18, 2021

Good Afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding S.B. 804 "An Act Concerning Inclusion in Certain Communities."

#### **S.B. 804 "An Act Concerning Inclusion in Certain Communities"**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed S.B. 804 "An Act Concerning Inclusion in Certain Communities." The Town of Harwinton is opposed to this bill as written, however is supportive of housing choice and economic diversity in our community. The concerns we have with S.B. 804 are similar to what we have had with many proposed bills over the years. We are vehemently against any state mandates that require or take a one-size-fits-all approach without the ability of municipalities to work with the state on a practical approach for each individual community. Mandating municipalities to allow, as of right, middle housing, accessory apartments, mixed use buildings and multi-unit residential buildings are problematic because they undermine the ability of the municipality to develop in a way that considers all its various local issues such as: inland wetlands, public health code compliancy, traffic, mass transit and public sewer and public water, etc. We understand the S.B. 804 is a proposed bill and has not been presented in full draft which makes it difficult for anyone to determine what the true effects, whether deliberate or inadvertently, it will have on local zoning laws and regulations. We further believe that before we can discuss effectively housing needs, real conversations have to take place regarding job development, retention, mass transportation and making Connecticut affordable to even reside here. This affordability effort becomes more evident during the recent pandemic and the exorbitant amount of extra taxes proposed during this legislative session. Pursuant to Section 8-30j, CGS, the Town of Harwinton is preparing an Affordable Housing Plan by the spring of 2022. The plan will include a housing needs assessment and consider the role of local and regional housing conditions on affordable housing development. However, this plan should also be allowed to include housing that is not deed restricted to provide a more realistic assessment of the number of affordable housing units in a community.

## **TOWN OF HARWINTON**

100 BENTLEY DRIVE

HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791

Tele: (860) 485-9051 • Fax: (860) 485-0051

Web Site:  
[www.harwinton.us](http://www.harwinton.us)

Email:  
[1stselectman@harwinton.us](mailto:1stselectman@harwinton.us)



## OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

All of these efforts will allow our municipality to have a strong foundation in supporting the development of more affordable and more attainable housing to meet the needs of our community. We encourage and look forward to the opportunity to work with you and others to truly analyze the housing needs of Connecticut with realistic numbers and requirements. Our plan will include community engagement and communication strategies in concert with local land use and zoning laws to identify barriers to affordable and/or workforce housing development.

The State of Connecticut should build on its already existing efforts and proven successful strategies such as: incentive housing zones, flexible affordable housing programs, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and Small Cities Grant program. Expanding these strategies will help with addressing the state's affordable housing needs. We also suggest the state adjusting the 10% affordable housing threshold which triggers the 8-30g, CGS, affordable housing appeals process to reflect that the threshold is currently not attainable in many towns as studied in the Blue Ribbon project and the fact that many small communities do not have the ability of public water, public sewers, mass transit, mass services and have numerous environmentally sensitive lands. I look forward to working with lawmakers to come together with other municipalities to develop a comprehensive, logical, affordable and responsible plan with realistic goals for each individual community without state mandates of a one-size-fits-all-approach.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Michael R. Criss  
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton  
[mcriss@harwinton.us](mailto:mcriss@harwinton.us)  
860-485-2916

## TOWN OF HARWINTON

100 BENTLEY DRIVE  
HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791  
Tele: (860) 485-9051 • Fax: (860) 485-0051



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

**Proposed Bill No. 804**

LCO No. 1908



Referred to Committee on HOUSING

Introduced by:  
SEN. ANWAR, 3rd Dist.

***AN ACT CONCERNING INCLUSION IN CERTAIN COMMUNITIES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 That the general statutes be amended to (1) address sewage flow  
2 capacity concerns related to areas that could be developed for  
3 residential or mixed-use buildings containing four or more dwelling  
4 units and involve the Commissioner of Housing in addressing such  
5 concerns, (2) restructure the Zoning Enabling Act for clarity, (3) address  
6 disparities in housing needs and promote integrated living patterns and  
7 inclusive communities, (4) incorporate several changes to zoning laws  
8 concerning middle housing, accessory apartments, mixed-used use and  
9 multiunit residential buildings, parking spaces and traffic needs, (5)  
10 address certain costs, fees, applications and appeals or other  
11 proceedings associated with certain residential development projects,  
12 (6) require the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management to  
13 convene a working group to study municipal affordable housing plans  
14 and zoning regulations, (7) allow housing authorities to expand their  
15 areas of operations, and (8) require annual minimum training in land  
16 use and planning law for members of certain municipal boards and

17 commissions.

**Statement of Purpose:**

To address several issues surrounding affordable housing, multiunit residential buildings, sewerage systems, housing authority jurisdiction, training for certain municipal officials involved in planning and zoning decisions and compliance with municipal zoning regulations.