

Written Testimony Charter Revisions - Regarding New Haven Boards and Commissions
From: Tagan Engel - 376 Central Ave, New Haven, CT

Dear Alders,

June 20, 2023

I am writing to you to express my support for allowing representation on our City Boards and Commissions from all the populations of people who live in our city, regardless of elector or immigration status.

I am a first generation citizen on my mother's side, born and raised in New Haven, CT. As a high school student I served on the Peace Commission, and as an adult I served on the Food Policy Council for 8 years. Through my work and personal life I am deeply connected to many communities of people across our entire city and think it is very important that everyone have representation in our City's decision-making bodies.

As the Chair of the Food Policy Council, I worked hard to recruit members of our community with direct experiences with the very issues our City Council was trying to address, such as hunger and racial and economic inequities in access to nourishing food. The first hand knowledge of systems and circumstances from these council members was crucial to our Council being able to identify key barriers and effective solutions to food issues in our city. This representation is something that we must have across all commissions and councils. We should not let immigration or voter registration status be a barrier to this civic engagement and support for effective solutions in our city.

Our City Boards and Commissions are meant to create effective and positive rules, regulations, and advisement for all members of our community. It is vital that we support representation on these decision-making bodies by all members of our community regardless of their elector or immigration status so that we include the knowledge and perspectives of all the people who are to be represented by these Boards. I support having teenagers from age 16 and older, as well as people who are community members with all types of immigration statuses as voting Board and Commission Members in our city.

As a NHPS alumni and parent, I also support having a seat or two on our Board of Education to be held by NHPS parents, and I support our student representatives in being full voting members of the BOE.

Without the first hand experiences, knowledge and perspectives of all members of our communities who want to be involved in decision making - including: teens and people of varying immigration statuses - our Boards and Commissions are weaker than they could be. I hope that our Board of Alders will take this important step in having more inclusive and effective leadership for our city!

Sincerely,
Tagan Engel