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BILLY HUANG
Chairperson

***TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO LEGISLATION COMMITTEE OF THE NEW
HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS***

*Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024
Billy Huang, Chair
New Haven Commission on Disabilities*

**PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO THE SECTION 22 OF THE NEW HAVEN CODE
ORDINANCES**

Distinguished members of the Legislation Committee, my name is Billy Huang, and I am the Chairperson of the New Haven Commission on Disabilities. The Commission is a mayor-appointed and board approved municipal commission tasked with reducing both physical and attitudinal barriers confronting Persons with Disabilities. It is comprised of persons with lived experience and those who work in the disabilities space either personally and/or professionally. We study and investigate individual and community problems which limit the rights of Persons with Disabilities in areas including employment, housing, economic mobility, recreation, health, transportation, and other pursuits. To this end, we work closely with the City of New Haven's Disability Services Department, various municipal agencies to bring forth issues that come forth from the community.

Today we gather to discuss proposed changes to Section 22 of the New Haven Code of Ordinances. The item of interest is: PETITION TO AMEND THE NEW HAVEN ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT OF SECTION 22: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS INCLUDING REMOVING THE OWNER OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENT, ALLOWING DETACHED AND ATTACHED ADUS OUTSIDE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING ENVELOPE, ELIMINATING THE MINIMUM LOT SIZE REQUIREMENT AND AMENDING SETBACK REQUIREMENTS FOR ADUS.

Persons with Disabilities experience housing discrimination at every level: there is a lack of accessible and affordable housing with no dedicated federal funding or initiative towards this end and, additionally, they are particularly vulnerable to housing instability as their average income lags in comparison to the general population. This is a particularly acute issue in New Haven as much of over 80% of the housing stock was developed before 1980 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and amendments to the Fair Housing Act in 1988 which added disability as a protected class.

As such, as New Haven continues to develop, especially in consideration of new modalities of housing such as ADUs, it is crucial that disabled individuals have safe, accessible housing in such a tight rental market. The Commission supports the development of adaptable ADUs both as a human and housing right.

Thank you.