

My comments concern HB 1281, which I support.

Durham's current ordinance prohibiting more than 3 unrelated people from cohabiting can discriminate, and it's not fair or just.

Regulating which people can live together is really violating civil rights, and can also target more vulnerable populations or those with less income. I imagine that there is also a real generational difference in how people living together are related or not, independent of whether they are students or part of the workforce. For instance, the mean age at marriage has been steadily increasing since 1998.

I realize that the current ordinance was meant to regulate student housing, but it's inappropriate to do it in this way. If it's noise that we want to regulate, or unruly behaviour, then we should tighten up those regulations, But telling people who they can choose to live with is not the way to do it.

And a word about the students; we are lucky to have a university in our town. If we have a student housing shortage, the university should be part of the solution, and until then, we should not be discriminating against students, either. I have heard people say that they are not a "protected class" of citizens, and this concerns me, Anyone residing in Durham deserves civil protections, including housing protections. I think our ongoing fear of students should not adversely affect our housing plan in Durham.

Again, I am not Pollyanna up here dismissing any concerns about student housing, but regulating all housing in Durham in this way is discriminating, and unfair, and potentially illegal. We should not be doing it, and we need to regulate in a different way.

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[PRESENTED TO HOUSING TASK FORCE  
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