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New York City Criticised for Failing to Get a Grip on Its Record Homeless Population

By Reena Karasin
Spare Change News - USA

A record-breaking 60,000 homeless individuals sought refuge in New York City's homeless shelters over autumn - a deluge that is drawing attention to the city's handling of its homeless citizens.

The city's affordable housing crisis is the primary cause of the increase, according to policy analyst for New York City's Coalition for the Homeless, Jacquelyn Simone.

The median annual housing cost in New York City in 2014 was \$15,780, according to U.S. Census data. High housing prices lead almost half of the city's residents to spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing.



A homeless woman sleeps in an alcove on 7th Avenue in Times Square in Manhattan, New York. Credit: REUTERS/Carlo Allegri

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Mayor Steinburg Offers New Direction on Housing Crisis

By Niki Jones

At a recent city council meeting, a representative from the Sacramento Association of Realtors, exclaimed that she and her colleagues are excited to see that more people from the bay area are moving to Sacramento, that there is robust energy in it all. She does not mention the excruciating way lower income families and communities of color are being displaced in the bay or the high rate of evictions and cost of living increases that wages simply cannot keep up with, that are driving people here to our humble city limits. In fact, she encourages the narrow idea that it is our own business growth here in Sacramento that makes us such a desirable place to live and is the cause this transition. She does not address the Sacramentans that are being priced out to make way for this wave of more affluent newcomers. For her and the business model that she is a part of, these are not the relevant factors. Her role in the system is to move people in; she does not have to watch as the people are moved out.

In a speculative housing market, driven by the commercial financial industry, the

outcomes for people, for families, are not a part of the equation.

If Sacramento is to keep our residents housed and house our unhoused residents, to "prevent and end homelessness" as is the oft stated goal by city, county, and continuum of care leaders, we will have to change this gentrifying equation entirely.

Sacramento is 59,316 truly and federally defined affordable housing units short to meet the needs of our residents, according to a report released in May of 2016 by *California Housing Partnership* and *Sacramento Housing Alliance*. The report finds that median rent in Sacramento County has increased 13% since 2000, with a contemporary 13% decrease in median household income adjusted for inflation.

This means our neighbors are struggling to survive, to get around, to stay housed, to pay bills and to feed their families at significant percentages in Sacramento. It means that families and individuals are losing housing. It means it is more difficult to find housing if you are required to move. It means our neighbors are becoming homeless.

Sacramento's 2015 Point in Time Count, recognized widely as a tragic under count, saw 2659 people experiencing homelessness on one night in January, 948 of those unsheltered, 291 were 18-24 years old.

Too often, issues around homelessness are discussed in terms of a deficit in our emergency response systems (or more shamefully and ignorantly for those conducting the dialogue, a deficit in our neighbors). This response deficit is very real, but it is not the reason people are becoming homeless. While circumstantial causes of an individual's experience becoming homeless are wide ranging, the advent of modern homelessness in America came with the deindustrialization of our labor force, enormous tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations, subsequently the decimation of public housing funding at federal, state and municipal levels, and an almost complete divestment in mental health facilities and care at these levels as well.

These were policy decisions made in the late 70's and early 80's. Visible homelessness

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Using & Abusing Immigrant Labor

By Cathleen Williams

I caught up with Fatima and Tony on the morning they left for Standing Rock to join the encampment of “water protectors” who have gathered by the thousands to oppose the “Dakota Access Pipeline” – the corporate mega-project that is intended to deliver fracked oil across the sacred lands and waters of the Standing Rock Sioux.

When we said good-bye, Fatima and Tony were standing by their overburdened car, their young faces full of hope and determination, their arms full of warm jackets, preparing for their long journey on icy roads to North Dakota to show their solidarity and support.

Fatima, who is undocumented, recently applied for legal protection under the “DACA” program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), created by Obama’s executive order in 2012. It allows undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children to receive relief from deportation and get temporary work authorization (renewable every two years).

Those who qualify for DACA pay a fee and have to prove they were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2015; they must also document that they came to the United States before the age of 15 and have lived here continuously since then. Almost a million American youth have enrolled in DACA.

Obama created DACA after years of dramatic activism by young people known as the “Dreamers” – a grass roots surge of occupations, hunger strikes, demonstrations and marches – brought into public view the injustice of treating as “illegal” the youth who have lived all their lives in this country. Obama also signed an executive order creating DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans) in 2014. DAPA would have protected the parents of citizens and legal residents, more than five million people, but it was halted by the Supreme Court after 26 states sued to invalidate it.

What happens now, with DACA

targeted by the new administration? Thousands of DACA youth have provided detailed information to the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security; another branch, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, enforces immigration laws – two million immigrants were deported by ICE under the Obama administration. Other than a policy memorandum, no law or regulation prohibits the use of DACA information to locate and hold these young people for deportation.

“Before you leave,” I said to Fatima, “Tell me what message you want to send to the public about DACA.”

“First, I want to say, I belong here,” she said. “Applying for DACA was a high, emotional, positive, experience, a liberation.” Then she continued, “I’ve felt crushed since Trump was elected, because DACA is one of things he speaks so viciously against. He attacks especially Mexican immigrants. But my community built this economy. They are profitable because their labor is cheap and they live in fear of deportation. They have sacrificed and gotten so little. No health insurance, no pensions. And they are dying of preventable, terminal illnesses from their work in agriculture, their work under the table.”

“I want to make it clear that even a small step like DACA – a temporary permit that can be taken away at the stroke of a pen – wasn’t given. We fought for it, risked deportation for it. Along with all the other Dreamers, I am undocumented and unafraid.”

To get a picture of what lies ahead for the DACA program, I met with Al Rojas, a leading voice in the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, AFL-CIO, a former California Deputy State Labor Commissioner, UFW founder, and veteran of years of activism and study based in California and Mexico.

“What you have to understand,” he said, “is that both Republican and



Photo from Human Rights Day Rally

Democrat corporate donors want access to this immigrant labor. It’s cheap, it’s vulnerable, it’s not unionized, it can’t protect itself against violations of minimum wage and overtime laws. And the sold-out top leadership of most U.S. unions has failed to fight back for this part of the working class.”

As Al Rojas explained, what the major corporations want is a new, expanded “guest worker” program – temporary visas issued for particular jobs to people who can be deported after a year or two and who are, therefore, completely under the control of their employers.

Not only agriculture, but the broad service industry (landscaping, hospitals, restaurants, hotels) are now calling for this cheap “legal” labor. Currently employed workers who are undocumented, and who do not qualify for guest worker visas, will be replaced and deported. Fifteen to 18 million workers are projected to apply for this type of visa once the guest worker program is expanded. Indeed, in the heart of California’s strawberry industry, from Oxnard to Salinas and Santa Cruz, hundreds of workers are already being laid off as the work is outsourced to guest workers.

The Bracero program, which was in effect from 1942 to 1964, brought in millions to work at farms (and railroads) for sub-minimum wages and slave-like conditions. By law, these workers could neither negotiate for wages nor strike. When they were no longer needed, when it was politically convenient, the U.S. launched the forced deportation of over 3.5 million of these workers to Mexico under “Operation Wetback”.

An expanded temporary guest worker program was a central part of the spurious Immigration Reform bill that failed in Congress in 2010.

The Trump administration has not been shy about preparing the way for guest workers and enhanced corporate access to cheap labor, naming as its Labor Secretary Andrew Puzder, the CEO of the corporation which operates fast food restaurants (Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’s). Puzder opposes any increase in the minimum wage and supports guest workers implicitly, commenting that with “the immigrant population you always have the ‘Thank God I have this job’ kind of attitude... If, however, we were able to hire people who are currently here illegally, if there were a way to change their status

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Immigrant Labor

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so that they are here legally, that would be a big benefit to us and to everyone else who has to hire[low-skilled] workers.”

In December, the Trump campaign announced that Diana Furchtgott-Roth, who has advocated for guest worker programs in the past, had been appointed to the transition team for the U.S. Labor Department. North Carolina state Senator Brent Jackson, named earlier this year to Trump’s agricultural advisory committee, owns a large farm near Fayetteville that has hired guest workers. The farm has been sued over alleged mistreatment and stolen wages. Another possible administration pick is Veronica Birkenstock, whose business, like Trump’s, specializes in bringing guest workers to do low-wage, seasonal, temporary work.

In addition to expansion of guest workers, tied to temporary jobs and subject to deportation if they become unemployed, Trump’s appointees affirm the threats he made during the campaign. Kris Kobach, a member of the transition team, helped design a post 9/11 program for registry of Muslim visa holders as well as Arizona’s abusive, and largely invalidated, SB 1070, which targeted Mexican-Americans and immigrants for harassment and arrest by the police. He has already affirmed that the wall will get built and that deportations could “easily” be boosted by 75% in Trump’s first year in office.

DACA could be converted to a temporary guest worker type visa – as it now stands, the work permit issued under DACA has to be renewed every two years. The program could also be allowed to “fade away,” by denying renewals, if it is not terminated outright.

According to Bay Area attorney Rachel Williams, who specializes in representing the undocumented, under current law all of the Dreamers would be guaranteed hearings before an immigration judge if they were

issued deportation orders.

“The immigration system is already broken, with years-long waiting lists for hearings. We don’t think they can schedule and hold a million hearings. But we’ll be there to fight for them.” San Francisco has already budgeted \$5 million to pay the legal fees of immigrants in the city threatened by Trump’s promise to deport millions.

What to do now, in the face of this oncoming assault? Lizbeth Mateo, a Dreamer who has been denied DACA status because of her leadership of the grass roots immigration movement, in a recent interview, voiced the feelings of many activists: “I think that, my hope is, that fear and that anger that we feel right now, being called rapists and criminals and all kinds of awful things, that they will translate into empowerment.”

Of course, the resistance movement has already begun to take hold. Even before the election, hundreds of jurisdictions, including Sacramento, have been functioning as sanctuaries – identified by ICE as having “a policy that is non-cooperative and obstructs immigration enforcement.” 12,000 marchers turned out after the election in the rebellious city of Los Angeles alone.

As pointed out by the brilliant young L.A. poet Matt Sedillo, it was Mussolini who defined fascism as the merger of the state and the corporations. “There is cause for all people to be alarmed. An oilman is Secretary of State. A billionaire is president-elect. Now is not the time for cynicism or same-as-it-always-was-ism. There is cause for alarm. Now is the time for organization and opposition. In the southwest, throughout the country and throughout this world, if we are ever to be free of the various chains that bind us.” (Matt Sedillo, *Southwest Political Report*, 12/16/16.)

New York City Homeless Population

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“There isn’t really any affordable neighbourhood in New York City anymore,” Simone says. “When you have a crisis like that, an affordable housing crisis, it’s just a matter of time until somebody falls behind on their rent and ends up in the shelter system. It can happen to anyone.”

The city’s Department of Homeless Services (DHS) offers a suite of programs designed to help individuals in shelters relocate to permanent housing. The six Living in Communities (LINC) rental assistance programs subsidize rent for individuals or families in a number of situations.

LINC, which provides support for families who are working full-time, requires that families pay 30 percent of their income in rent. A family of four could receive a \$1,119 monthly subsidy.

While New York City prohibits landlords from discriminating against applicants based on source of income, Simone says that people in the LINC program have been turned away nonetheless. The coalition is calling for greater enforcement of the anti-discriminatory law.

LINC has also promised landlords a \$1,000 signing bonus since October 2014 and offers them financial protections if the tenant fails to pay rent or causes damage to the unit.

But even these steps do not ensure that all LINC beneficiaries can find housing, given the city’s housing shortage.

“Even if you have a landlord who is completely on board with the voucher program, if you have dozens of applicants there’s still one apartment,” Simone says. “We can’t just voucher our way out of the homelessness crisis - we simultaneously need to be building our way out of it and increasing the housing supply with real affordability levels.”

DHS also offers services to prevent homelessness, many of which are part of the Homebase program. With 23 locations, Homebase is designed to keep New Yorkers out of the shelter system - a move that, Simone notes, saves individuals from experiencing trauma and saves taxpayers money.

Homebase presents an array of services including eviction prevention, job search assistance, and financial counselling.

The city has recently dedicated extra funding to legal services that help prevent against evictions, Simone explains, but adds that the coalition would like to see the initiative expanded to a legal right to council in housing court for people at or below 200 percent of the poverty line.

Despite the high number of homeless individuals in the city’s shelter system, the DHS says in a statement that Mayor Bill de Blasio’s programs made that number about 7,000 fewer than projected.

“We said five months ago that it would take time to reverse 20 years of policies and that the number of people in shelter might continue to grow,” Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Steven Banks said in a statement. He added, “Our current programs have substantially slowed the rate of growth in homelessness. And we will keep working to strengthen our efforts to prevent homelessness.”

Simone says that the city has plans to expand Homebase. DHS did not provide comment.

“We know how to help [homeless individuals], but we just don’t have the resources to help them,” Simone says. “We really need both the city and the state to do as much as they possibly can to tackle this crisis, because we know what works to solve homelessness, and we just need our elected leaders to embrace these proven solutions by focusing on housing.”

Courtesy of Spare Change News / INSP.ngo



PROTECTING THE SACRED LAND AND WATER

Interview with Chief Dave Archambault II of the Standing Rock Sioux.

Editor's Note: Wesley Elliot, Haudenosaunee from Six Nations of the Grand River, did this interview for the People's Tribune (excerpted for publication).

Wesley Elliot: It seems that the corporations and the government work together. How are you dealing with that?

Chief Archambault: We're just exposing that. The reason why there's a merger is the way federal laws are created, and the way the federal laws that are in place infringe on indigenous rights, indigenous peoples. So, there's a natural merge, saying this is legal, for a corporation to punch a pipeline underneath one of purest, cleanest bodies of water that are left in the United States. So the laws reinforce this merger and so we have to expose the wrong, and we have to expose how laws, no matter how legal it is, it is just wrong to infringe, to continue to infringe, on what is important and what is precious to indigenous peoples.

Wesley Elliot: Can you talk about the importance of water?

Chief Archambault: So, we have a saying called mi-ni-wi-chon

[phonetic spelling]. We have another saying mi-da-kya-se. What it means is that there's a web of life, and everything in that web of life is related, and it has a spirit, has a na-vim, like a soul... Everything that has a spirit or a soul is occupying something that needs water, so we all need water, so water is life, and so water is not a resource, a subject or a matter, water is more than

that, it's like a relative, and when all things that have a connection, and are related – we're related to the four legged, or the winged, or the ones that crawl or the ones that swim, or the ones that flower or the ones that grow – if you are related to them, you can communicate... But until that water is gone they will always be our relatives. So water is life for every thing.

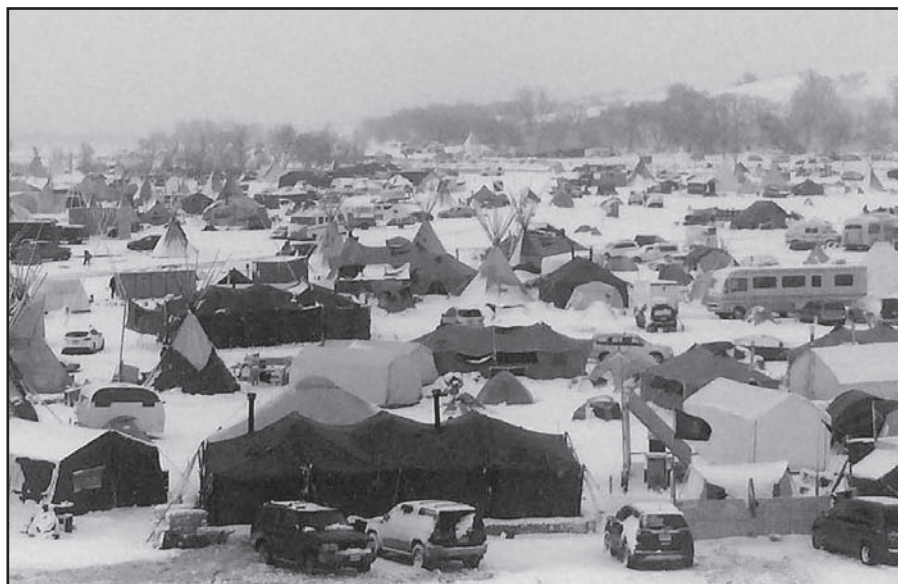
Wesley Elliot: Can you discuss the issues of poverty and oppression here in your territory?

Chief Archambault: So, poverty exists. If you look at the ten poorest counties in this nation, two of them are here on this reservation, we straddle North Dakota and South Dakota. Five of the poorest counties are in the Great Plains. It's not because what we have done to ourselves it's because of the oppression that has put on us. It's happened for 200 years.

It's been the ramifications of federal policies – ...taking of our resources, taking our land, taking – never protecting what is ours, taking our children, beating them when they

spoke the language, giving us a piece of land, then saying you only get this much and we're going to open it up for settlers. Flooding the Missouri River, that was once a river, now it's a lake. Flooding our most pristine land, the land that bore the most fruit, the land that had the game, the land that had our shelter, the land that had the cottonwood trees, flooded and destroyed forever...

When you're in a state of oppression, a state of poverty, that is not your fault, it's because of all the wrongdoings that have been done to your people, that created this state. When you're in that state, it's really hard to not think about yourself, because you're struggling, you're trying to survive for yourself. It creates individual interest. So you have to try get beyond that, and say, I'm not worried about myself any more, I'm worried about what's going to happen in a hundred years, and what I do today, can that make a difference for those children and their children who aren't even born yet, and are they going to have a world to live on.



New Direction on Housing Crisis

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became wide spread in a way unseen since before the New Deal. Out of this crisis, an emergency response system was created, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the non-profit industry and the faith community, that has never been funded to the scale necessary for the crisis, nor has been aimed at alleviating the root causes. These policy trends have not been lifted by any administration, left or right. Our incoming, far right wing administration has already shown their path forward with the usual tax-cut tax plan and the potential appointment of Ben Carson to lead HUD. Both moves promise more of the same agenda by giving the wealthiest another big break and further dismantling our housing safety net, both in funding and in ideology.

Darrell Steinburg seems to be forging a different political path forward. While in the State Legislature, Steinburg championed Proposition 63, The Mental Health Services Act, which included a small tax increase for the wealthiest 1% of Californians as a funding mechanism. These funds have been used throughout California to improve access and infuse mental health providers with sorely needed support. The added clinicians, respite hours, and yes, even shelter, are positively affecting the lives of many Californians struggling for mental wellness. But these services remain insufficient; the wait for a person experiencing homelessness in Sacramento to see a psychiatrist through Sacramento County's Guest House Clinic, the "front door" for mental health services for these neighbors, can be one to two months. There is much work to be done.

Steinburg also supported the No Place Like Home Initiative which will work to harness Prop. 63 dollars to provide housing to people as a mental health care that housing stability so clearly is. Mayor Steinburg has promised to leverage those dollars to expand the city's stock of permanent supportive housing. At a recent Sacramento Homelessness Organizing Committee meeting, Steinburg explained his plan to work with Sacramento County in regard to the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, the Joint Housing Authority tasked among other things with maintaining public housing, it's wait list and the Housing Choice Vouchers program (formerly known as Section 8), a private market tenant-landlord based program. He noted the SHRA turnover of 800 units (through both programs) a year.

He then stated "We're writing a resolution...Be it resolved that the Redevelopment Agency shall redirect 800 units per year for two years...and dedicate those units to permanent

housing for the homeless. Period. End of sentence."

There has been concern over this idea within the redevelopment agency and housing advocacy community as it would displace for two years a wait list that Veronica Beaty of SHA says can already be three years long. At the very least, if the Mayor wants to achieve this with the least amount of harm, he should find ways to triage the existing wait list, where families and individuals in extreme vulnerability do exist and should not be passed over.

Beaty also mentioned the potential of increased landlord discrimination preventing use of the tenant based vouchers for people experiencing homelessness. This discrimination is already the prevailing norm, most landlords do not accept the vouchers and are not required to. That piece of tenant protective regulation is long overdue here in Sacramento and beyond. Without these protections, add extreme class disparity, no recent rental history, possible mental wellness issues or a criminal record and let's see if these market based vouchers are the solution we are looking for.

Sacramento City Council has released developers from any requirement to include mixed income housing, that is housing that was at least 15 % "affordable" for a spectrum of lower income households when developing new projects in Sacramento. When asked about this policy shift at a recent Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee meeting, Mayor Steinburg expressed that there is concern by some of the "housing advocacy community" over what he called "strict inclusionary" because most of the affordable housing would go only to new growth areas. He then stated he's "for strengthening our laws."

Fair points, Mayor. However, if the concern here is equal distribution of low income housing throughout the city, then to strengthen our laws, we should push for a return to the inclusionary requirement on all developments throughout Sacramento, existing or proposed, rather than excusing developers everywhere from the responsibility to build with nothing more than profit margins and aesthetics in mind. He then said "we must have our own self-enforced, and be accountable for it, production standard...20-25% minimum are going to be for working people, for low income individuals."

To this it must be said, nothing short of legal requirements has ever provoked the housing industry along with the banking industry, (as they are hand in hand in controlling access to safe,

affordable shelter in our society) to offer that kind of housing for working, poor people, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people. Legacies of racist segregation, discriminatory redlining by banks and real estate gatekeepers, landlord abuse and neglect, classist exploitation of tenants and borrowers; all have required legislation at all levels of government to mitigate the massive harm to our communities, and all continue to prove themselves presently active and in need of further regulation and resistance today.

We've seen over half a dozen housing developments this year begin or finish in the central city that are now not subject to the Inclusionary Ordinances 15% baseline. Some, considered infill or agreed to before the change, are not even subject to the measly, \$2.58 per square foot fee option. The fee is a small payment made to our City's Housing Trust Fund instead of building affordable housing for our residents.

The September 1st 2016 issue of *Sacramento News and Review* noted that "Between 2000 and mid-2015, the city's 15 percent requirement caused 1,559 affordable units to rise, according to SHRA records. But since it was changed in 2015, officials from the city of Sacramento's Community Development Department acknowledge that the replacement fee hasn't resulted in any new affordable housing units: That is ZERO. Since then the city has instructed SHRA to loan \$2.1 million dollars from the Housing Trust Fund and \$600,000 in HOME funding, and to issue \$4.5 million dollars in mortgage revenue bonds to fund 21 new units at the landmark Belvue Apartments, a currently empty building in need of renovation downtown. So with hundreds of market rate units going up around us, we see the possibility of these yet to exist 21 units alone as sorely disparate.

And for the thousands of people that

will experience homelessness over the next two years, or even tonight, before there are meaningful expansions of conventional housing, Sacramento and the new mayor need to work to honor our communities' self determined strategies of survival. We need to protect renters who are housing their loved ones instead of continuing to allow landlords to threaten and evict them. According to federally mandated counts of homeless students, in 2014 87% of Sacramento's 11,429 students that experienced homelessness were prevented from hitting the streets by living doubled up with friends or family. We have to honor and support this compassion in our community members rather than pit it against their own housing stability. We need to decriminalize our homeless neighbors' existence by passing a local Homeless Bill of Rights and by ending enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance.

Sacramento's elected officials have been far behind federal and local community perspectives on this. While the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has called for an end to criminalization strategies in municipalities, finding they are wasteful in cost and a counterproductive, non-evidence based tactic to end homelessness and the Department of Justice has called it "cruel and unusual punishment," Angelique Ashby, Steve Hansen, and our homeless services coordinator, Emily Halcon, have all insisted publicly that the ordinance is a necessary tool to connect people to services.

This is a blatant lie that has been refuted, not only by exposing it's backward logic that a connection to the criminal justice system will benefit one's housing stability, but also by the surfacing of local data that citations rarely come with referrals of any kind, except of course to court. We know this "tool" is used to stave off NIMBY complaints, to confiscate survival supplies (tents, sleeping bags), and to degrade and demoralize and punish our neighbors living outside.



Affordable Housing Mural by Art Hazelwood and others - Courtesy WRAP, San Francisco

ALL ALONG THE MEXICO-USA BORDER WALL

By Lisa Baertlein - Reuters

Building a wall along the U.S.- Mexico border has been a contentious subject in this year's U.S. presidential election.

In parts of California and Arizona, a wall already exists.

It runs across rocky deserts, flowing sand dunes and miles of agricultural land.

The wall splits towns and families, marking a boundary between two countries that used to be one. Busy land ports of entry and signs written in both Spanish and English attest to an interdependence that still exists in the bifurcated cities, faded mining towns and eccentric

art outposts that punctuate the arid landscape.

The border between Mexico and the United States spans some 2,000 miles between San Diego, California and Brownsville, Texas. Monitored around the clock with ground sensors, cameras and hundreds of customs and border patrol officers, the wall is composed of a mash-up of materials: formidable cement slabs, steel mesh, rusty corrugated metal.

There are oddities along the fence: a home surrounded by life-sized space alien mannequins and toy UFOs; the statue of a cow mounted high above the ground near a cattle ranch; and gaps in the fence occur sporadically



Buildings in Nogales, Mexico (R) are separated by a border fence from Nogales, Arizona. Credit: Reuters/Mike Blake



A gap in the U.S.-Mexico border fence is seen outside Jacumba, California. Credit: Reuters/Mike Blake

without explanation.

A man rode a tricycle in a small California border town past a grocery store with a one percent sign hanging on the wall. In Nogales, Arizona's largest international border community, the wall neatly divides the city. Little else distinguishes the hillside homes stacked on either side. Drivers entering Mexico are warned by a sign that firearms and ammunition are prohibited. At night, a bright neon yellow McDonald's sign stands out.

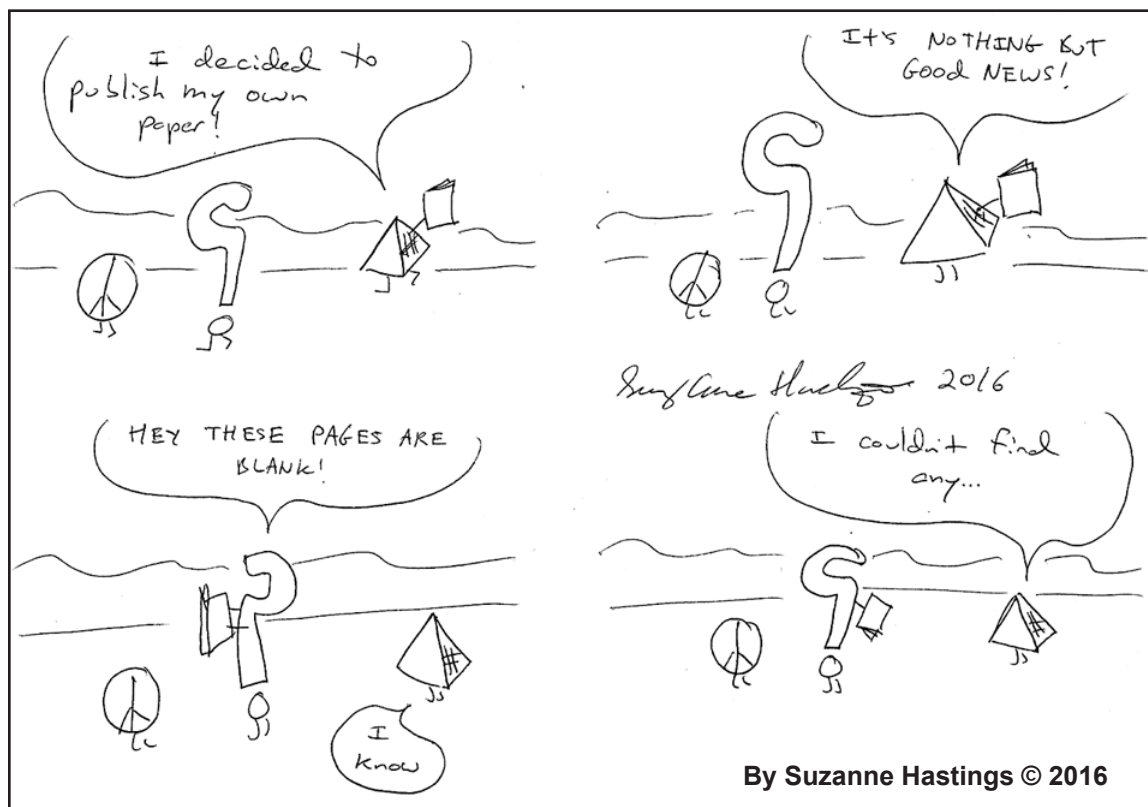
Some who live near the border in California and Arizona agree with U.S. Republican presidential

candidate Donald Trump and his demand that Mexico pay the cost for construction of a wall on the border between the two countries. Others are deeply disturbed by it, like Mexico's government.

"It's been stigmatised pretty bad," said Jaime Alvarez, a retired Army auditor running for Arizona Senate. He works out of the Democratic party office in the city of Douglas.

Alvarez said residents are worried that too much talk about border control will distract people from having other important discussions about education, poverty and healthcare.

Courtesy of Reuters / INSP.ngo



By Suzanne Hastings © 2016

*A Special Thanks to Our
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**Arturo Baiocchi
Ronald Blubaugh
Joan Burke
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**Loaves & Fishes
Organize Sacramento
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Poems by Donté Clark

Love Story

May you be
mustard seed in a field
of weeds & thistles
be all of watered faith & less drought
in belief, peak baby girl
Sky RYSE high for a bird's eye
view you a branch for tired wings
sing your needs in morning prayers
midday smiles from
spirit notes written to you
cupped I see you & believe in
love letters
inked forever features free of fetters
cosmetics have on the soul
I see you as a love story
that only from within is the
story ever told



Drown

More times than not
These tears don't

Fall.

They puddle inside pond a river flow stream
Til bellies fill up with floods of

Em-oceans

Suppress until the Levi breaks
Eyelids. Can be stubborn sometimes
Hold sorrow hostage.
In these eyes, somewhere in the

Tides.

Té is drowning

Steps

life
at the snap of
fingertips
& pulse of breath
bend the high head down
buckled knee
lowered eyes
sift through quick sand for repentance favor
when hearts are
woven gold
in truth
footprints lead narrow
edge of cliff
I
leap
to not surprise I walk on sky...

Richest Americans Live Seven to Ten Years Longer Than Poorest

By Ronnie Cohen - Reuters

Poverty cuts an average of almost ten years of American men's lives and seven off women's, a new study shows.

Eager to tease out socioeconomic disparities that can hide in state-level data, researchers reclassified all the U.S. counties into 50 new "states" based on household income instead of geography. Then they examined longevity, smoking, obesity, childhood poverty and other health information from the richest and poorest places.

Men in the poorest spots died on average nearly 10 years earlier, at 69 years old, than men in the wealthiest ones, and women in the poorest places died on average seven years sooner, at 76 years old, the research team reports in the American Journal of Public Health.

"The results should be deeply disturbing to all persons in the country," the study authors write. "Life expectancy in the poorest 'state' falls below that of more than half the countries in the world, meaning that, in essence, there are several developing countries hidden within the borders of the United States."

Senior author Dr. Randy Wykoff said in a phone interview that he expected to see differences in smoking and obesity rates - and that's indeed what the study showed. Adults in the poorest places were twice as likely to smoke and 50 percent more likely to be obese. But the life-expectancy gap surprised him, said Wykoff, who is dean of the College of Public Health at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City.

Also stark were the numbers about race and children living in poverty.

Non-Hispanic African-Americans were 4.5 times more likely to live in the poorest regions than in the richest, the study found. Also, more than 48 percent of children in the poorest spots lived below the federal poverty line, while less than 9 percent of children in the wealthiest did.

"Nearly half of young children grow up in low-income families that cannot provide them with adequate resources to thrive," Dr. Neal Halfon wrote in an email addressing the study.

Halfon directs the Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was not involved in the research.

"It is not hard to see that individuals born in these low-income and deprived places with few resources are likely to have much lower lifelong health trajectories," he said. "The public sector and civic sector have not been able to put together a comprehensive anti-poverty campaign."

The study authors suggest that public health programs should be targeted more narrowly than by state, focusing instead on the poorest counties.

Researchers found that five states - Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas - housed both the richest and the poorest people in the nation, suggesting that poverty stems not only from a lack of resources but from their unequal distribution.

Wykoff warned that failure to address economic, educational and health disparities in the poorest spots could lead to a further widening of the gap between the nation's rich and poor.

"We hope this study reinforces the understanding that poverty really is a major factor that impacts health," he said.

Other countries have had some success combating poverty, Halfon said.

"Unfortunately," he said, the U.S. has "not had the political will nor the inclination to take this on in spite of the devastating long- and short-term consequences."

Courtesy of Inter Press Service / INSP.ngo

**In Sacramento City & County, California
78 homeless people died in 2016
Average age for women was 47
Average age for men was 49**

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Resources List

Night Shelters

Salvation Army: 12th and North B St. 30 days per year: Dormitory living, C&S: Dinner, breakfast clothing for residents: Men/Women: Sign-up SA patio weekdays at 1PM. 442-0331**St. Johnis Shelter:** Women and Children. 4410 Power Inn Rd. Call between 10am & 3pm for space availability. 453-1482**Union Gospel Mission:** 400 Bannon St. Beds for Men Only, sign up 6:30pm at mission, Newcomers/Referrals have priority. 7:30pm Chapel Service with meal afterwards, 6am breakfast for residents. Showers / shaves 9-11am & 1-2:45pm. open to all homeless men: 447-3268**Next Move (formerly SAEHC)** 24 hr Family Shelter; Families, single adults with children who have no other resource: Women's Refuge; single women, no children: Call for screening/space availability 455-2160**Volunteers of America Family Shelter:** Adults w/children only. Apply Tues.-Thurs. 1-3 pm 1490 Bldg B, N. "A" St. 916-443-4688

Day Shelters

Friendship Park: 12th St. & North C: Weekdays 7am - 2:30pm: open to anyone: Many services

Meals

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon St.: 7 days, Evening meal, Men/Women: Church service 7:00pm required, dinner following 8:30-9:15pm. Sunday 11am service, lunch at noon. 447-3268**Loaves & Fishes:** 1321 No. C St.: Lunch every day 11:30am-1pm. Tickets available 7 am- 12:30 pm at Friendship Park weekdays: at 8 am on Saturday and 10am on Sundays .**Women's Civic Improvement Center:** Seniors Only: 3555 3rd Ave. 11:30-12:30 lunch M-F 452-2866**Food-not-Bombs:** serves free food in Cesar Chavez Plaza, 9th & J St., every Sunday 1:30 pm. All Welcome.**Foundation of Faith Ministries** 2721 Dawes St. Rancho Cordova. Every 4th Sat. 3-5 pm All Welcome.**Glory Bound Street Ministry** 4527 Parker Ave. Sundays; breakfast 11:30 am after 10 am church service; dinner 6:30 pm after 5 pm church service: Fridays; dinner 7 pm after 6 pm church service. Must attend services. 452-7078**Calvary Christian Center Safe Haven:** 1300 North C St. 8 am Sun, Coffee, breakfast 6 pm Wed. clothes closet after services.

Women & Children

Maryhouse: 1321 No. C St. suite 32: Breakfast for Women and children 8am-9am. Day shelter 8am-3pm weekdays for women and families.**Wellspring** 3414 4th St.: T&Th full breakfast: M-W-F continental breakfast for women and children. 454-9688

see Youth Services for young adults

Free Clothing

Sacramento Food Bank: 3333 3rd Ave. (at Broadway) 10am-2pm Mon - Fri. 456-1980**Union Gospel Mission:** 400 Bannon St. Men: M-Sat 9-11am or 1-2:45pm: Women and Children: Thurs. 9 am signup, 9:30-10am bible study, 10 am - 12 pm shop. 447-3268**Glory Bound Street Ministry** 4527 Parker Ave. Clothes Closet, Sundays 11:30 am all welcome. 452-7078

Medical

Mercy Clinic: For homeless adults, children: Nurse's office in Friendship park 7:30am & 12:30pm. 446-3345**Sacramento Dental Clinic:** 4600 Broadway (Primary Care Bldg) Walk-ins 8 am - 12:30 pm 874-8300

Mental Health

Guest House, 600 Bercut Drive.: Homeless Mental Health Clinic. Mental Health evaluation, medication if needed. Housing referrals for mentally ill, GA refs, SSI apfs, refs to A & D counseling: 916-440-1500**TLCS Intake Offices:** 1400 N. I St. Bldg. A; Adults 18 yrs & up; Referrals to transitional living programs, independent living, mental health support services; SSI/SSDI application assistance; Walk-ins 8-11am M-F 440-1500**Genesis:** Professional Counseling for life problems. Referrals. 401 12th St. (DeLaney Center). 699-1536

Youth Services

Wind Youth Services: Drop-In Center for youth (ages 12-24) experiencing homelessness: 1722 J Street, M-F 9am-6pm, S-S 10am-2pm: Emergency shelter for ages12-17, call **1-800-339-7177**: Emergency shelter for ages 18-24, call **916-561-4900**. Services also include: street outreach, case management, mental health

Crisis Intervention

WEAVE: Services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children. Referrals to court mandated battery intervention programs, Safe house, 24 hr. crisis line: 920-2952

AIDS / HIV

AIDS Housing Alliance provides residential care, transitional housing & permanent housing services to homeless persons living with aids. 329-1093 weekdays.**CARES (Center for AIDS Research, Education and Service):** 1500 21st ST. Serves people with HIV and AIDS. Medical care, mental health, case mgmt, health ed and regional prevention/ed classes. 443-3299**Breaking Barriers:** Homeless Outreach Program provides direct services to people living with AIDS and HIV. Transportation to social services, medical appointments, job interviews, and housing assistance. 447-2437**Harm Reduction Services:** 40001 12 Ave.; High risk outreach; HIV, Hep-C testing; case management for HIV; free medical clinic, needle exchange. 456-4849**Alternative Test Site:** Free anonymous HIV testing, Wed /Thurs. Call for appt. 874-7720.

Legal Aid

Disability Rights, CA: Free legal services for people with disabilities. Call for appt. toll free: TTY:(800)776-5746**Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic:** 401 12th St. (DeLaney Center) Free legal assistance and advocacy for problems related to homelessness. 446-0368**Legal Services of Northern California, Inc:** 515 12th St. (at E ST.) M-F 8:30am-12pm, 1pm-5pm. Problems with public benefits, landlord / tenant, divorce clinic. Call for appt. 551-2150**Welfare Rights:** 1901 Alhambra Blvd. (2nd floor) M-F 9am-5pm: AFDC, Food Stamps, Welfare and Medical rep at hearings. 736-0616**Social Security Disability / SSI Lawyer Free Consultation** (916) 658-1880

About SHA

The Sacramento Housing Alliance is a network of concerned citizens who promote decent affordable housing for low income households and homeless people through advocacy and participation in public discourse.

For more info, or if you would like to participate, please call:

(916) 455-4900<http://sachousingalliance.org>909 12th Street, Suite 114
Sacramento, CA 95814***The SHA does not itself provide or manage housing.***

Veterans

VA Outreach: 1-800-827-1000**Homeless VA Coordinator:** (916) 364-6547**Mather VA Social Works:** help getting DD-214, any vet. (916) 843-7064**Sacramento Veterans Resource Center** 7270 East Southgate Dr. 393-8387

Miscellaneous

Francis House Center 1422 C St. Must get a lottery number 9am. M,Tu,Th,F for Direct Services: ID vouchers, transp. assistance; In depth resource coaching by apt.; Veteran's advocac.; Notary services Thurs. call for apt.; Job Development Center M,Tu,Th,F 9:30am - 1pm. Family Rescue motel vouchers for qualified families Mon. 1pm. **(916) 443-2646****Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services:** 3333 3rd Ave. (south of Broadway) Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 10am-1:30pm, and Wed 4pm-7pm. 456-1980.**Social Services:** 28th & R ST. M-F 7:30am-5pm. Call for asst. 874-2072**Employment Development Department (EDD):** 2901 50th St. (at Broadway) M-F 8am-5pm. Unemployment, job services. 227-0300**Medi-Cal:** 1-800-773-6467, 1-888-747-1222. Or see DHA eligibility workers 1725 28th St. 916-874-2256**Social Security Office:** 8581 Folsom Blvd (East of College Greens Lite-rail stop, past the flea market) M-F 9am-4:30pm 381-9410: Natl line 1-800-772-1213**211 Sacramento**
Dial 211

for tele-info & referral service

Califorina Youth Crisis Line:
1-800-843-5200**Health Rights Hotline:**
551-2100

Welcome to Homeward:

Please help us make a difference!



Homeward Street Journal has been publishing since 1997 as a non-profit project of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing

Committee, which is a member of the Sacramento Housing Alliance. The paper's mission is to alleviate miscommunication between communities by educating the public about housing and poverty issues, and by giving homeless people a voice in the public forum. Homeward also informs homeless persons of shelter and occupational assistance, and acts as a creative self-help opportunity for those individuals who wish to participate.

The opinions expressed in Homeward are those of the authors, and not necessarily the Sacramento Housing Alliance or SHOC or Homeward.

Submissions and Editorial Policy

We welcome any participation or contributions: Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted at our office in Friendship Park, or mailed to the address below.

All writing submitted for publication will be edited as necessary, with due respect for the author's intent. The editors will attempt to consult with an author if changes are necessary, however, the paper will go to print with the story as edited if the author is unavailable.

All Letters to the Editor must be signed to be published. If the writer wishes to remain anonymous s/he should so state, but the letter must still be signed.

Poetry and graphics will not be edited, either the paper will publish the submission or not.

In submitting articles to the paper, authors give their permission to print their submissions in accordance with the above stipulations, as well as possible reprinting in INSP member papers, with due byline. Any requests for stories outside the above three will be referred to the author.

Subscriptions are available with a \$20 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee).

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