

The Challenge Presented by Stubborn Facts

<http://www.venicenc.org/docs/34484091-6585.pdf>

February 19, 2017

NB: I have clarified the attached **February 14, 2017 Joint VNC Board & Discussion Forum Committee Meeting Discussion Generator Supplement** (pages 2 through 6 below) by changing the word **blacks** to **people** on page 5 to make it crystal clear that the **supplicant position** factor applies not only to **blacks** but to **all people** who find themselves trapped in areas where the fears common in 'ghettos' exist - ie, 'ghettos' being what I characterize as 'disadvantaged communities'; and I have added new **Stubborn Facts** on page 5.

This is a complex systemic issue.

Please note the **stubborn facts** which any efforts to address it must consider.

Please look at what you may feel has 'helped' in the past and what you believe may 'help' in the future, and do so in the context of the irrefutable **stubborn fact** that **"the facts on the ground for a typical California family are really as bad as they've ever been in the state's history".***

Ask yourself (and/or the organizations you believe are 'doing good') if your efforts (and/or your organization's efforts) may have failed and/or may continue to fail to achieve the desirable objectives you (and your organizations) hoped to achieve - and (more importantly) ask yourself **why they have failed** – and/or **why they may continue to fail** unless some sort of change is implemented.

I consider the below **Discussion Forum Committee Strategy Objective MOTION**** an attempt to learn from past failures and perhaps use those experiences as a springboard to improving how we might do something more constructive in the future – something that might avoid us finding many years from now that **"the facts on the ground for a typical California family are really as bad as they've ever been in the state's history".**

Sincerely,
Joe Murphy
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joedmur@gmail.com

* It's significantly worse now than it was in March 2015 when **"an average California home costs \$440,000, about two-and-a-half times the average national home price (\$180,000). Also, California's average monthly rent is about \$1,240, 50 percent higher than the rest of the country (\$840 per month)."**

[State of California Legislative Analyst Office](#)

** MOTION: Request VNC Board support of the **Discussion Forum Committee's** commitment to generate and submit to the Board, for its review and approval, a set of recommendations capable of implementing the following **Strategy Objective**:

Develop and present to the board a set of policies and laws which would encourage private and public efforts to provide more less-expensive 'homes' in existing LA residential communities in a way which would become, over time, within the economic reach of ownership by less wealthy residents – 'homes' where they and their families would feel they 'belong' to a 'community' without the fears common in 'ghettos' – an approach designed to create & then maintain a systemic housing supply/demand balance in all of LA's residential communities.

February 14, 2017 Joint VNC Board & Discussion Forum Committee Meeting

Discussion Generator – The Challenge

Facts are Stubborn Things

<http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/3235.html>

“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” *John Adams, US diplomat & politician (1735 - 1826)*

'Argument in Defense of the Soldiers in the Boston Massacre Trials,' December 1770

Who are L.A. County's homeless?

<http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-homeless-los-angeles-2016/>

JON SCHLEUSS & LORENA INIGUEZ ELEBEE

OCT. 28, 2016

The 2016 count of the homeless population, taken in January, revealed that our county has more than 43,000 people living on the street or in shelters. (Long Beach, Glendale and Pasadena were not included.)

It's a diverse group of individuals. They're not defined by one characteristic, but by many. Some homeless subpopulations grew in 2016, while others decreased.

“Blacks are the largest racial or ethnic group [39%] ... And they're disproportionately represented. Only 8% of the county's population is black.”

JDM inserted the below to show that similar facts in a federal case constituted “stubborn facts” justifying a ruling based on the equivalent of racial prejudice. The “stubborn facts” above (39:8) are significantly more dramatic than those cited below (41:20) and constitute a much stronger case for determining that racial prejudice is a major contributing factor in LA's homelessness and must somehow be addressed.

Seattle Judge derided by Trump - a Conservative Jurist

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_TRUMP_TRAVEL_BAN_SEATTLE_JUDGE?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

BY GENE JOHNSON

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Feb 4, 2017

[Jan 2017 case] ... Robart grilled a Justice Department lawyer, Michelle Bennett, asking if foreign nationals from the seven countries named in the order had been arrested for plots in the U.S. since 9/11. Bennett said she didn't know.

"The answer to that is none, best I can tell," Robart said. "You're here arguing on behalf of someone that says we have to protect the United States from these individuals coming from these countries, and there's no support for that."

He added that he was tasked with determining whether the president's order was "grounded in facts, as opposed to fiction."

[Summer 2015 case] ... Robart was holding a hearing in [this] case in summer 2015 - a time fraught with tension over violence by and against police officers around the country - when he surprised the courtroom by adopting the mantra of protesters.

"The importance of this issue to me is best demonstrated by the news," he said, shaking his head and sighing heavily.

"According to FBI statistics, police shootings resulting in death involve 41 percent black people, despite being only 20 percent of the population living in those cities. Forty-one percent of the casualties, 20 percent of the population: Black lives matter."

California's housing affordability problems **"as bad as they've ever been in the state's history"** **housing director says**

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-california-housing-affordability-1483490282-htmlstory.html>

Liam Dillon

JAN. 3, 2017

California's housing affordability challenges remain daunting and continue to increase, according to a draft report from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development released Tuesday.

The report found:

- Housing production over the last decade fell more than 100,000 new homes short of demand and continues to lag, leading to surging prices at all income levels.
- The state's homeownership rates are at their lowest since the 1940s.
- One-third of the state's renters spend more than half their income on housing costs.
- California has 12% of the nation's population, but 22% of the country's homeless population.

"What the report tries to get at is that the facts on the ground for a typical California family are really as bad as they've ever been in the state's history," said Ben Metcalf, director of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The report includes a range of potential solutions, including streamlining local and state land-use and environmental rules and boosting funding for low-income housing.

NY Times Sunday Review OPED

No Racial Barrier Left to Break (Except All of Them)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/14/opinion/sunday/president-obama-martin-luther-king-racial-barrier.html>

**We can't create a more just nation simply by
dressing up institutions in more shades of brown.**

Now we must confront structural racism.

By KHALIL GIBRAN MUHAMMAD

Khalil Gibran Muhammad is professor of history, race and public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and the author of "[The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America.](#)"

January 14, 2017

California Legislature

California cities would have to make it easier to build houses under new legislation

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-california-cities-will-have-to-make-it-1485196277-htmlstory.html>

Article By Liam Dillon

January 23, 2017

State Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) statement regarding his proposed SB 35 bill:

"Local control is about how a community achieves its housing goals, not whether it achieves those goals."

The bill's provisions would only apply in cities where growth isn't keeping pace with housing production targets developed by the state every eight years that are designed to ensure California has enough homes for its growing population to live affordably.

Rethinking America's 'Dark Ghettos'

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/11/rethinking-americas-dark-ghettos/508400/>

A Harvard professor argues that fixing America's urban poverty will require a dramatically different approach.

[Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform \(2016\)](#), by [Tommie Shelby](#)

The Atlantic

Interview of Tommie Shelby by Alana Semuels
November 22, 2016

“... government’s interventions have amounted to policy tweaks, and haven’t focused enough on the unjust system that created these areas in the first place.”

Semuels: “What is different about addressing ghetto poverty and addressing other forms of poverty, including rural and white poverty?”

Shelby’s Response

“Ghetto poverty is marked by racial stigma and involuntary segregation. Not all forms of poverty have those features.”

Semuels: “Some successful [government programs](#), such as Moving to Opportunity, help move black families from poor and dangerous neighborhoods to wealthier, white areas. Yet you argue that residential integration and programs such as these are not a fair solution. Could you explain your reasoning?”

Shelby’s Response

“What I find troubling is that in an attempt to deal with the problem of ghetto poverty, the government makes needed resources and services available only on condition that poor black people join predominantly white communities. I regard it as almost insulting to put the economic fate of the ghetto poor in the hands of more affluent whites, who then get to decide whether to allow blacks into their social networks and on what terms. Then you're sort of putting disadvantaged blacks in a supplicant position ...”

Inspired by Measure S, California lawmaker takes aim at anti-growth ballot measures

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-sac-vote-slow-growth-measures-20170216-story.html>

Article By Liam Dillon

February 16, 2017

A Los Angeles lawmaker wants to make it harder for cities and counties to slow development in their communities, a response to decades of local ballot measures in Los Angeles and across California that have tried to restrain growth.

Assembly Bill 943 from Democratic Assemblyman Miguel Santiago increases the threshold from a simple majority to a two-thirds supermajority for passage of any local ballot measure that would block or delay development.

Santiago said the legislation would ensure local governments couldn't further restrict housing supply in the state.

“You can't address California's housing crisis by suppressing the construction of housing.”

Santiago said that ballot initiative [Measure S], as well as the continued worsening of California's housing affordability problems, spurred him to write the bill.

More than two-thirds of coastal communities in the state have adopted growth-limiting measures such as caps on population or height limits on buildings, which are aimed at restricting residential development, with the significant majority passed through the ballot, [according to the state's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office](#).

These proposals can have a large effect on housing costs, a key issue at a time when **the state's median home value of \$485,800 is more than two and a half times the national average**. A 2006 study of California land-use rules by UC Berkeley researchers found that **each growth restriction a city adopted increased home prices between 3% & 4.5%**.

L.A. community plans languished for years. Now they're an unlikely issue in the March election

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-los-angeles-election-community-plans-20170210-story.html>

Article By David Zahniser

February 17, 2017

L.A.'s collection of community plans, and the city's longstanding failure to update them, have emerged as a major issue in the March 7 election campaign. The plans are considered central to the work of real estate development, spelling out what can be built on each street. Yet they have languished for years, as the city coped first with a recession and then a legal defeat.

Community plans are one of the main tools Los Angeles uses to prepare for future population growth, anticipating where additional homes and job centers can be built. Yet most of those plans were adopted years before the region's rail network expanded into Pasadena, Santa Monica and East Los Angeles.

City leaders say the plans should already have been updated to ensure that higher-density housing and other amenities can be built near transit stops.

“There will always be growth. We have to figure out where we're putting that growth ... and in what parts of the city. But ...”

“... if we don't have the basic elements in our community plans, we really don't know where we're headed.”

Councilman [Jose Huizar](#)

“There's a lot of conversation out there saying that ... if the community plans were simply updated, we would fix everything. I can't tell you how false that is.”

Councilman [Mitchell Englander](#)

Proposed Discussion Forum Committee Action to be considered at its March 14, 2017 meeting

MOTION: Request VNC Board support of the Discussion Forum Committee's commitment to generate and submit to the Board, for its review and approval, a set of recommendations capable of implementing the following Strategy Objective:

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The above Strategy Objective addresses the below Diversity Vision Goal:

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate realistic recommendations designed to increase economic diversity, including [~~affordable~~ **less expensive***] housing, etc.

[* Clarification inserted November 24, 2014 by Joe Murphy]

And it also addresses the broader intent of the VNC Vision Goals:

... to promote a more proactive, collaborative vision for VNC Committees to include in their deliberations as they formulate recommendations for Board consideration, the **intent** [being] to create a working framework of integrated strategies capable of achieving, over time, broader consensus and increased ... [**Focus on Children, Participation, Walkability, Diversity, Creativity, Collaboration, Brainstorming**]

DFC Chair's Personal Perspective

The above DFC's proposed Strategy Objective will not solve the short-term 'shelter' – or many of the related social – problems facing homeless people, and it would be a mistake to assume that such is intended.

It is intended to find a realistic and implementable **strategy** which, among other things, avoids

“putting disadvantaged [~~blacks~~ people*] in a supplicant position.”

[* Clarification introduced Feb 11, 2017 by Joe Murphy]

If approved by the Board and subsequently pursued successfully, it could significantly and permanently erode a key underlying cause of the long-term homelessness crisis and its associated race-based '**black-ghetto-creating-and-maintaining**' cycle. It could do this at a cost which would be relatively minimal compared to the combined costs of current efforts.