

The Challenge Presented by Stubborn Facts

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

February 26, 2017 Condensed Version

I'm of the opinion that the 'stubborn facts' I've listed in my 'challenge' original version bring into question all efforts to date to deal with the housing/homelessness/ghetto problems. I'm suggesting that we need to somehow take a collective step back and take a good hard look at why these efforts have failed and are likely to continue to fail. This is why I prepared the following motion:

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.

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.

The challenge I'm presenting is to ask anyone who is interested or involved in the housing/homelessness/ghetto problems we face to focus on the 'stubborn facts' raised below and to ask yourself probing questions as to whether current and/or past efforts have worked.

I've used **red text** to emphasize points I consider important.

I've used **green text** to suggest some questions you may wish to consider.

I've provided hyperlinks to the sources in the digital version which you can access at <http://www.venicenc.org/discussion-committee.php>.

1. [January 3, 2017 LA Times news article](#)

The [draft report from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development](#) released recently 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.

Do you agree?

Is anyone or any program doing anything that is likely to overcome this 'stubborn fact'?

2. [January 23, 2017](#) and [February 16, 2017](#) LA Times news articles:

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.

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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%**.

Is it possible to address the housing shortage without changing the laws in a way that encourages rather than discourages the construction of the requisite housing?

3. [October 28, 2016 LA Times news article](#):

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.”

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The above, and the research reflected in the [January 23, 2017 LA Times OpEd](#) of **Khalil Gibran Muhammad** and in the [November 22, 2016 The Atlantic](#) interview of [Tommie Shelby](#) regarding his 2016 book, [Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform](#), establish that the persistence of ‘black ghettos’ are an integral part of the housing/homelessness/ghetto problems we’re seeking to address, particularly as to the tendency of proposed solutions to **“put ... disadvantaged [blacks people] in a supplicant position”** – a tendency inherent in any program relying on subsidies.

Do you agree?

Is anyone or any program doing anything that is likely to overcome this ‘stubborn fact’?