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Remembering David Miles
Street Sheet Vendor #248
August 18 (1956 or 1958)—March 6, 2024

Survived by fiancé Michelle Bushey, also a Street Sheet vendor. They were due to be married on July 4, 2024. He was living at Bishop Swing Community House at 275 Tenth St., a supportive housing building in the South of Market neighborhood.

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COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.

ORGANIZE WITH US

HOUSING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP
TUESDAYS @ NOON

The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Email mcarrera@cohsf.org to get involved!

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP
WEDNESDAYS @12:30

The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Email lpierce@cohsf.org

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!

THE BEAT GOES ON:

CATHLEEN WILLIAMS WITH
PEGGY LEE KENNEDY

THE STRUGGLE OF LA'S VEHICULAR RESIDENTS AND THE VENICE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Venice, Los Angeles: A neighborhood for poor people, for renters who used to thrive in cheap apartments on the rundown back streets, a neighborhood famous for its countercultural vibe and freedom, where the wide beach and boardwalk teemed with performers, drag queens, artists, and outcasts. In the 1950s, Venice was a center of the Beat Generation in southern California—a local counterpart to San Francisco's North Beach. By the '80s, it became a home to a growing population of unhoused people, spending their nights on the ground and in vehicles.

Peggy Lee Kennedy grew up in Venice in the '60s and '70s and emerged as a leading fighter for her neighborhood. Big real estate money—and the politicians who serve it—colluded to take over Venice and make it what it is today: a neighborhood for the white and the wealthy, mobilizing the police to get rid of the “undesirable” unhoused residents who had the tenacity to refuse, resist and stay.

It's a similar scene in other California cities—including San Francisco—that are now moving to disperse streetside and vehicle-dwelling communities from public view.

Kennedy describes this lost paradise of her teenage years: “When the circus came to town and those nomads needed a place to stay, they stopped in Venice. The Deadheads, following the [The Grateful Dead], migrated through Venice. The big nude beach thing ... the next thing we knew people were walking through town, totally naked!”

She describes how residents fostered their culture and strong sense of community. “It was mixed. My high school had every ethnicity imaginable— one-third white, one-third Black, one-third Latino.” She reflects, “We were working class, though of course we didn't know that then, and we also didn't know we were targeted for elimination.”

According to recent data, the neighborhood is now predominantly white, and earns more than \$200,000 in yearly median income.

The process of displacement of the people who used to live in Venice began with development of the neighborhood next door, Marina Del Rey— wetlands that were once the home of the Tongva and Shoshone people. Despite its ecological significance, developers considered it useless and dug out the area in the '60s, replacing it with a yacht harbor.

“That was the beginning of the end,” Kennedy says. Then came the demoli-

tions, the prosecution of code violations, the exceptions to rent stabilization, conversion of housing to short term rentals, the construction of luxury housing, the “market rate” rentals that locals couldn't afford.

Political disempowerment followed dispossession. City Hall used every strategy: discrediting and breaking down local structures and leaders, redistricting city council representation, promoting and electing fake “progressive” politicians by activating the new affluent residents, popularizing their narrative of hatred for homeless people.

“We fought and we fought and we fought,” Kennedy says. “The fighters and advocates—we are all ‘socialists,’ or ‘Peace and Freedom,’ or whatever.” There were many blows. One time, the Sheriff refused to investigate the theft of their Food Not Bombs van. Another time, the Police Department shined lights through her windows at night to scare her off.

In 2001, Kennedy and her allies founded the Venice Justice Committee., now called the Venice Justice Committee and Media Group. The committee filed lawsuits and won many of them—including an historic decision in 2018 striking down the city's attempt to block them from gathering signatures and donations, or even passing out leaflets, on the boardwalk.

“Meanwhile, they were demolishing Venice and putting up giant buildings, hounding people, pounding on their doors, pressuring them to ‘cash out,’” Kennedy says, pointing out that the number of Black people in Venice started to drop, “their little craftsman homes demolished for luxury mansions.” The city conducted huge operations to get rid of Black people—in 2006, a multi-agency warrant campaign that included the Sheriff and LAPD.

“Kids driven out, grandmas forced out, people who had survived code enforcement, the crack epidemic,” Kennedy says, recalling the uprooting of Oakwood, Venice's historic Black area and multi-generational community.

Deliberately, in the open and in secret, the political attack focused on vehicle-dwelling residents, even as their population exploded. Of course, this goes far beyond one politician, city planner, or billionaire/multimillionaire developer—and includes the current city council representative, Traci Park—but former city councilmember Bill Rosendahl also served as a prominent example.

In 2010, Rosendahl delivered the following message for vehicular residents

and advocates like Kennedy in a town hall: “If you are defined as a homeless person, you are not welcome in Venice. If you operate an RV, you are being targeted, and just so you understand we're going to threaten you, intimidate you, without offering any reasonable solutions based on respect and dignity.”

In her 2016 obituary of Rosendahl for The Venice Beachhead, Kennedy described the tools that were used to outlaw vehicular residents. “Bill Rosendahl brought in two new anti-homeless L.A. City laws (OPD [Overnight Parking Districts requiring permits only available to housed residents] OVO [Over-sized Vehicle Ordinance outlawing parking between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.]) and used the Living in Vehicle law (LAMC 85.02),” she wrote.

Kennedy continued to describe how “Rosendahl appropriated funds to study a never-created safe parking program, which was an imaginary carrot—illusional compensation for the harsh, inhumane, unconstitutional treatment of vehicle-housed people in Venice.”

Kennedy notes that the use of 85.02 in 2010 led to a strong rebuke of the city in 2014, when the Venice Justice Committee and allies brought a federal civil rights lawsuit, *Desertrain v. LA*, against its enforcement. In 2014, the court found the ordinance, which outlawed “living” in a vehicle, to be unconstitutionally vague, leading to selective and discriminatory enforcement against the unhoused for even “staying in a car to get out of the rain.”

During this period, Kennedy lost friends and allies from the attack on vehicularly housed residents, especially those whom she befriended. “Some got sick,” she wrote in The Beachhead. “Some died. Others were permanently driven from their home. Later, after the harm had been done, some were housed and used as [Rosendahl's] success story.”

Kennedy concluded her piece, pointing out a stark reality: “NOT ONE PARKING SPACE WAS EVER CREATED IN VENICE via this safe parking program pipe dream.”

But the win in the *Desertrain* case was short-lived. The ordinance was amended and enforced with new language. Today, Kennedy says, “It's sweeps, and towing, towing, towing.”

But this is not the end of the story. Affordable housing advocates continue to fight, after ten years, for Venice Dell, a project which would house over 100 low income and unhoused residents.

And the beat goes on. “We had to do something,” Kennedy says. Last week, with the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy, the Venice Justice Committee released a report that included findings from an in-person survey of 99 vehicle residents residing in West Los Angeles over a year's time.

“Los Angeles is a starkly unequal city,” the report opens. “One in which the accumulation of wealth in gated and guarded estates rests upon the impoverishment of workers and tenants.”

The analysis is stark and unflinching: in a city where there are 13,549 vehicle dwellings used as “a personal safety net,” the main strategy of managing mass homelessness is “banishment,” or forced mobility through criminalization, described as a coalescing strategy across municipalities that displaces and dispossesses vehicle residents “in an effort to discipline and push them into whatever program government officials are pushing at the time.”

The city of Los Angeles imposes parking restrictions as its main weapon—there are 1,367 restricted parking zones across the city, according to LA's progressive Controller Kenneth Mejia—and then uses tickets, towing and impoundment to make it virtually impossible for owners to retrieve their vehicles.

As the report points out, this “vicious cycle of debt and dispossession for minor reasons” isn't unique to vehicle residents, as it disproportionately impacts poor and working-class people generally and makes up a substantial portion of impounded vehicles, earning these seizures the moniker “poverty tows.”

The controller's report is more than practical and factual: It's also visionary. It makes clear recommendations that would solve the crisis of unhousing the people:

“While governments across California and beyond expand policies of displacement and dispossession of vehicle residents, parking stability paired with supportive services that enable access to affordable housing offers an alternative vision.”

The report testifies to the power of engagement, tenacity and unity of a dispossessed and impoverished class that is under fire, and leaders, like Peggy Lee Kennedy, who carry the fight forward.

“We have to change the narrative,” she says. “That means listening to lived experience.”

FINAL BUDGET DOES IRREVERSIBLE SF RESIDENTS, CITY POLICY PRIORIT

Despite important wins, People's Budget Coalition stands in strong opposition to finalized budget that sacrifices key services and values in order to criminalize poverty

Early on Thursday, June 26, at 2 a.m., the Board of Supervisors Budget and Appropriation committee voted to approve a budget that balances an \$800 million deficit on the backs of San Francisco's poorest and most vulnerable residents while expanding funding for jail expansion, high-end police equipment purchases and Mayor's Office staffing.

The People's Budget Coalition stood up and fought back, bringing together hundreds of organizations representing thousands of workers in a historic demonstration of unity and solidarity. We won critical restorations—including \$3 million for civil legal services, \$3 million for SRO collaboratives, \$240 thousand for LGBTQ support, and full reversal of threatened City layoffs. But these victories and long term organizing power came in the context of sweeping structural harm.

When Mayor Daniel Lurie introduced his budget, he held the Police, Sheriff and Fire departments, and the District Attorney's office harmless by not asking them to do any cuts. This set up a dynamic where cuts were to come disproportionately from health, housing and human services. In addition, he increased many of these budgets by adding a jail and \$60 million in police overtime, even after the documented overtime abuse came to light.

Despite claims that housing, public safety and economic recovery are top priorities, the budget will slash funding for workforce development, homelessness prevention and violence prevention/victim services programs—all while doubling down on failed strategies that criminalize poverty.

Major cuts include:

\$11 million in slashed funding for workforce development programs

\$1 million cut from immigrant worker rights programs

\$1.5 million cut from programs that help get homeless populations off the street and connected with services

“This budget proposal weakens services and protections for everyday San Franciscans, immigrant workers and working families at a time when these communities are facing unprecedented attacks, to benefit corporations downtown, in a false scarcity mindset at one of the richest cities in this country.” said Claire Lau of the Chinese Progressive Association. “Services that allow immigrant workers access to legal aid and programs that help them recoup stolen wages are being reduced. We ask that the City works with stakeholders to develop strategies to fund and strengthen services for all immigrant families and workers in the long term.”

The People's Budget is concerned that while it saved some vital programs, this budget isn't a win. City leaders chose a new jail over jobs, violence prevention and long-term housing affordability. That's not a compromise—that's a betrayal. We applaud the supervisors who fought alongside us to restore funding for critical community services, but we demand structural changes that allow future budgets to better represent the will of all San Franciscans, not just the wealthy and well-connected donors and corporations whose interests are clearly and obviously centered in this budget.

They are also deeply concerned by the Mayor's decision to undermine San Francisco's democracy by demanding—at 1 a.m., under the cover of darkness—that the people's branch of government surrender its authority over Our City, Our Home (also

known as Prop. C) funds. A committee vote of 4–1 took place to remove the voter mandate of a supermajority in the legislative branch to change spending allocations. While this authorization was limited in nature to new revenue under \$19 million, it was startling and unprecedented.

Many voter initiatives have this provision as a protection against executive abuse of power, ensuring that the legislative branch has guardrails in place to protect the will of the voters, except in exceptional circumstances. This is why a supermajority vote is required to change spending mandates in Prop. C. For the first time, the Mayor asked the Supervisors to vote to remove that supermajority threshold.

“San Francisco is not a kingdom, and it is not a corporation, it is a democracy,” Jennifer Friedenbach, director of the Coalition on Homelessness, said. “Prop. C, Our City, Our Home was carefully constructed to ensure that data driven, voter approved mandates existed to build a responsive and efficient homeless system that was protected from wrongheaded political winds. We anticipated that there might be a need to change the spending categories over time, but that those changes should be made with great care and oversight by the people’s legislative branch. The supermajority vote that this current board removed is the very mechanism to protect that spending.”

The Mayor originally proposed cutting \$88.5 million from primarily youth and family housing funds and moving them to primarily single adult shelter. However, only some of those shelter expenditures had a plan or an identified building. The original proposal was shrunk down, as the Mayor did not have the a supermajority of votes for his initial plan, especially given the blow that would have delivered to efforts to address the doubling of family homelessness in San Francisco. The investment plan as

laid out by Our City, Our Future, \$20 million to family housing and \$20 million to aged youth housing and \$20 million to youth housing, which was wiped out in the 2009-2010 budget. The city restored \$20 million of the family housing, youth housing and none of the aged youth housing. The proponents of Prop. C were not in the supermajority required to pass the measure.

“We need a balanced approach. Homelessness Oversight is a coalition who’s also a Prop. C proponent. The shelter basket does not address target root causes. Beyond emergency housing and prevention, we include families with young children. That’s the only way we can reduce the numbers of homeless ex-pats and create affordable housing.”

The Coalition on Homelessness, Our City, Our Home in 2020 gathered input from unhoused people, community makers, business and neighborhood leaders, Franciscans. The measure passed with 63% voter approval, and collecting a record \$1 million from 300 unhoused people who were helped and knocking on doors. The report released in 2020, has led to new housing including 1,700 units for prevention, shelter and

ACTION STEP: SEND A LETTER BEFORE THE VOTE ON JULY 8TH

Thanks so much for considering sending this letter. We are especially focused on Supervis

We really need your help to honor the will of the voters and preserve the integrity of Prop C. A two-year requirement for two years is a very dangerous precedent to set. If the Mayor has a solid hel

Here is a sample language for the letter. Please email to: Chyanne.Chen@sfgov.org, myrna@sfgov.org, Board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org

Dear Supervisor _____:

I am writing to strongly urge you to reject Section 4 from the trailing legislation (File No. 2018-0001) and to support the City of Seattle's position in the *Our City Our Home* (2018):

Section 4. Under the authority in Business and Tax Regulations Code Section 2811, the Board may expend future revenues that will be deposited in the OCOH Fund through fiscal year 2026-27 required under subsections 2810(b)(1) and (2), among any or all of the eligible programs to be described in subsections 2810(b)(3)\A)-(D), notwithstanding the specific percentage allocations, and subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors by appropriation.

This is a major departure from the provisions of Prop C. Voters specifically required a supermajority to approve any changes to Prop C allocations. Section 4 of this legislation weakens the voter's intent on reallocation with only a simple majority vote.

The removal of the supermajority requirement is a major departure from previous versions change undermines the will of the voters and puts the integrity of citizen initiatives at risk intent of the voters as well as the citizen initiative process protected in the San Francisco C

We call on you to respect the will of the voters and proponents of Prop C such as the Coalition section of the trailing legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
<<your name

HARM TO IES

r Home oversight body had allocated \$30 g subsidies, \$10 million to transitional \$1 million to Bayview housing, all of the Mayor’s budget. The final proposal he family housing, \$9.5 million of the e of the Bayview housing. However ere especially concerned about the change uirement.

proach to addressing homelessness,” t Committee member Christin Evans, ponent, said. “Placing all our eggs into ot end homelessness, and it does not ond shelter, we must make investments on, especially for demographics which ung children and transitional age youth. tackle the long-term trend of growing acerbated by our City’s severe lack of

essness led the efforts to craft Prop. C, 2017 and place it on the ballot in 2018 with eople, front line service providers, policy ighborhood groups and everyday San ure received a groundswell of support, approval, attracting over 600 volunteers number of signatures. In addition, over orked on the initiative, calling voters The measure, the funds of which were d to over 5,700 San Franciscans being children, along with thousands receiving behavioral health services.

ors Mahmood, Melgar and Chen.
C. Taking away the supermajority pful proposal it will get the support!
a.melgar@sfgov.org, Bilal.Mahmood@

250609) associated with Proposition C,
rd of Supervisors authorizes the City to 27, after addressing the specified costs address or prevent homelessness as tions that would otherwise apply, subject

rmajority of the Board of Supervisors ers’ deliberate safeguard by enabling
of Prop C trailing legislation. This . The Board and Mayor must honor the harter.

ion on Homelessness and reject this

MTA PASSES PERMIT PROGRAM, STEP ONE OF LURIE’S RV BAN

CHARLIE FISCH AND AZUCENA HERNANDEZ

On Tuesday, June 17, the Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors met to approve the first phase of Mayor Daniel Lurie’s RV ban, a refuge permit program that exempts oversize vehicles from the two-hour parking limit for up to twelve months. The Board passed the permit program in a 6-1 vote with three amendments, adding two appendices and amending the language of the legislation to ensure an automatic extension of the permit for another six month period.

Lurie announced the two-hour citywide parking limit on Tuesday, June 10 and plans to implement it in two phases, the permit program and the two hour parking limit. The permit program was approved by the MTA last Tuesday, and the Board of Supervisors will vote on the permit program on Wednesday, July 9. Should the Board of Supervisors approve the suggested ordinance, the legislation and accompanying permit program would go into effect in September at the earliest.

Vehicles granted the refuge permit must be in the city’s database compiled in May 2025. The permit only exempts vehicles from violations of the two-hour parking rule, and is valid for two six month periods. All other violations, including outdated registration and the 72-hour rule will still apply. If RV residents refuse a housing offer, their permit will be revoked. Vehicles who were not counted in May 2025 can enter an appeals process, and will be granted access to services if they can provide parking tickets, registration, or other documentation that proves their residence in San Francisco in the month of May.

The permit program fails to account for the complex needs of RV residents and limits them to housing offers that may not suit their needs. Many housing offers will not accept pets

and may not account for disability or safety needs. RV residents that work atypical hours may have their movements restricted by shelter policy, disrupting the autonomy granted to them by their vehicle. The six-month timeline suggested by the city is also deeply misguided; the city cannot house every RV resident in six to twelve months. The city does not have the resources to house the residents of 437 vehicles. This plan will lead to the displacement of RV residents and increased street homelessness as residents struggle to find other shelter.

In the face of millions of dollars of cutbacks to vital transportation and social services, the MTA has allocated \$3 million for new signage to enforce the RV ban. \$1.1 million has been allotted for case management, \$1.9 million for “problem solving” and \$525,00 for 100 vehicle buyback offers, totaling in \$3.5 million taken from the OCOH prevention fund. This money could house 75 individuals or prevent 500 households from losing their homes. Not to mention the \$4.9 million being taken out of the general fund for a Journey Home program, which is rarely used.

Many RV owners spoke at the MTA hearing to emphasize the importance of their vehicle and the dangers of a two-hour parking limit. Many RV residents have been priced out of San Francisco and see RVs as the last option of safe living. One RV resident living near Lake Merced explained, “I never thought that in coming to this country there would come a time where I wouldn’t be able to afford rent. I thought the best solution would be to then buy a car to live in [...] it took a lot of strength and happiness to buy that vehicle to live in and now it’s become a nightmare.”

Other residents pointed out the difficulty of facing yet another restriction that criminalizes their

solution to homelessness. An RV resident living in the Mission told the MTA Board, “I don’t understand why we would have to go through all these hoops now to get this permit for safe parking [...] If you’re going to make these policies you should at least invite some of us to the table.”

Other speakers at the board meeting emphasized San Francisco’s obligations as a sanctuary city, and the new dangers immigrants living in RVs face under the Trump administration. “Latino families who are the predominant make up of the families living in RVs,” said a member of the Latino Task Force (LTF). “[They] have been under stress since the restrictions were put in and they are absolutely terrified.” Coalition staff share LTF’s concern and can confirm that many residents contacted on outreach are Latino families with varying levels of documentation. This RV ban will disproportionately affect the immigrant community of San Francisco.

For families pushed out of housing in San Francisco, vehicles provide a sense of safety and autonomy. A family of three residing in a RV said during public comment, “I don’t have steady work right now and this [RV] is the only way I can provide a roof over my daughter’s head. This is the only shelter that I am able to provide [...] We are fearful right now and only I feel it right now and I don’t want her to feel the fear of them taking the shelter we have right now.”

Despite the overwhelming support for the permit program among MTA board members, several appeared to have misgivings about the quantity of resources, collection of information, and safety of immigrants living in RVs. Even with several hours of public comment, the MTA passed the permit program, with Stephanie Cajina placing the only no vote.



HOMELESSNESS IS TOP OF MIND FOR MANY CALIFORNIANS. WHY DOES THE PROPOSED BUDGET ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR IT?

MARISA KENDALL, CALMATTERS

California's main source of homelessness funding would drop from \$1 billion last year to \$0 this year in the proposed state budget.

State leaders have been talking a lot lately about cleaning up California's homeless encampments and moving people indoors. But the tentative budget they've drawn up for the upcoming year has many asking: With what money?

Both Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature have proposed gutting the state's main source of homelessness funding in the 2025-26 budget, sending a wave of panic through the cities, counties and service providers that have been relying on that money for years. Now, those critics warn that thousands of Californians could end up back on the streets, undoing the tenuous progress the state has made in addressing the problem.

"It's extremely frustrating," said San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, whose city had been receiving about \$30 million a year from that pot of homelessness funding — enough to pay for about 1,000 interim housing placements. "Residents of California tell us consistently that ending unsheltered homelessness is one of their very top priorities... So the idea that the state can't make a substantial, consistent investment in residents' top priority makes me question whether or not they're really listening to the people of California."

The Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention program has doled out funds for cities and counties to spend on everything from temporary shelter to services to permanent housing since its creation six years ago. It started with \$650 million in the 2019-20 budget, and has since grown to \$1 billion last year.

Since 2023, the program has provided housing for more than 57,000 Californians, according to the Bring California Home Coalition, made up of affordable housing providers, advocates for homeless individuals and government staff.

But with the state facing an expected deficit of \$12 billion this year, those funds ended up on the

chopping block. The 2025-26 budget proposed by the Legislature June 9 allocates \$0. Lawmakers passed a placeholder Friday, but the budget still has to undergo additional negotiations between Newsom and lawmakers before it becomes final. Even so, the governor already has indicated he's fine with stripping homelessness funding.

At the same time, California could soon also be reeling from federal cuts. President Donald Trump's proposed budget would reduce funding to the Housing and Urban Development department by 44%, slashing the rental subsidies and federal homelessness funding that flows to California.

Newsom has, in a sense, been preparing cities and counties for a blow to state funds. He has for years resisted calls to make homelessness money permanent, instead preferring to dole it out year by year in a one-time grant — making it easier to cut in a tough budget year.

Despite ramping up spending on the issue to unprecedented levels after taking office (last year the Legislative Analyst's Office found the administration had spent \$24 billion on housing and homelessness), the governor changed his tune in recent months. His message now is more along the lines of: I've done my part, now cities need to step up and take care of the crisis on their streets.

Newsom recently suggested cities do that by passing ordinances banning encampments.

"I'm not interested anymore, period full stop, in funding failure," Newsom said last month, a refrain he's been repeating often.

But the cities and service providers that rely on those funds say it appears he's no longer interested in funding success, either: While California's homeless population remains the biggest in the nation — with more than 187,000 people sleeping on the street and in shelters — it increased just 3% last year, compared to a nationwide increase of about 18%.

Critics worry gutting funding will erode that modicum of progress.

homelessness funding has been crucial in the city's push to move people out of encampments and into temporary placements in tiny homes and converted motels. Like other cities, San Jose still is waiting to receive its homelessness allocation from the last budget. But once that money is spent, probably by next summer, San Jose will feel the hit, Mahan said. When that happens, the city probably won't have to close existing programs, because it's lucky enough to have other funding sources, he said. But it won't be able to build new units, effectively stalling the city's plan to get everyone off its streets.

Mahan and other California mayors have for months been urging state leaders to reconsider ever since Newsom's initial January budget proposal zeroed out the homelessness funds.

Instead, the Legislature suggested adding \$500 million back into the state homeless funding program — but not until in the 2026-27 fiscal year. That would be a 50% reduction from last year's allocation. And there's no guarantee that money will come through at all. In addition, lawmakers proposed reducing another, smaller homelessness program — which provides money to cities specifically for cleaning up encampments and moving occupants indoors — by \$100 million.

It's not all bad news, pointed out Ben Metcalf, managing director of UC Berkeley's Terner Center for Housing Innovation. The Legislature's budget includes \$500 million in low-income housing tax credits to fund the construction of new affordable housing, and \$120 million for the Multifamily Housing Program, which provides loans for low-income housing.

But the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention program may have been politically easier to gut, Metcalf said. That program doesn't benefit from deep-pocketed lobbyists defending it in Sacramento.

And because of the complex, intractable nature of the homelessness crisis, the money hasn't produced the kind of tangible, grand-slam results voters want to see on their streets. Instead, homelessness remains a persistent problem, and encampments still dot California's cities.

But without that money, some shelters and housing programs are likely to close, Metcalf said. Others could simply become less effective. The state program provided funding for the types of counseling, case workers and other services that help people transition from shelters into permanent housing, he said. Without that extra help, people often languish in shelters.

"So what you end up with, probably, is more Band-Aids," Metcalf said, "or patchworks of systems that are providing some modest amount of (improvement in) the quality of life but not really helping transition people permanently out of homelessness."



"Simply put, this choice will lead to more people moving onto California's streets and fewer avenues off the streets," the Bring California Home Coalition said in a statement.

In San Jose, the state

A police officer waits for James Harris to come out of his tent set up in front of the Ferry Building in San Francisco during an encampment sweep on Aug. 9, 2024. Photo by Manuel Orbezo for CalMatters

WHEN A DOCTOR’S EXAM IS PART OF A COSMIC TEST

JACK BRAGEN

Recently, I went to see a doctor in my new neighborhood, one where most of the population is high-income. When I got to the waiting room, I happened to spot a couple of people who are likely on Medicare as I am. It was comforting to realize that I would not stand out as the only economic misfit.

Everyone seems to be ahead of me in life and can handle a faster pace than I can. I’m not dumb, I’m just slow. And I can’t handle many of the things people assume everyone can do, partly because of my schizophrenia. I was at the doctor’s office, and I could not understand everything the doctor was telling me. She was young, in her thirties at the most, and probably didn’t grasp all the special needs of a disabled 60-year-old. I was given a link to “MyChart,” to access my medical records. I would rather not deal with online charts if I can avoid it, but in this case, I couldn’t.

When the doctor quickly examined my knees, I told her that I was experiencing extreme pain. She prescribed ibuprofen.

That appointment was my social interaction for the day.

This year, the loneliness threatens to engulf me. I’m not alone—pardon the pun—as loneliness has real health impacts. A 2023 surgeon general report linked the lack of social connection to increased risk of heart disease, stroke and developing dementia. I often see people getting support from their lovers, their parents or even from a social worker. Where is my support?

People with schizophrenia also face the risk of dementia as they get older. Rebounding from a

high-strung existence to something this quiet has caused me to loosen the rubber band. My mind was degrading.

The combination of advancing age, alienation and adversity can lead to a downward spiral if I allow it to.

Sixty is not typically considered a time for making a fresh start. People my age are usually settled, and have enough sense not to walk away from something that works even if the shoe pinches on the inside.

I’m in the process of a divorce that causes me heartbreak, which I never felt until a few short years ago. I also moved away from a residence where conditions were dangerous, overcrowded and seedy. At the same time, those conditions filled the air with a thick energy that fed my mind with raw, intangible material that I needed.

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But I’m not finished.

The average life expectancy of a schizophrenic man is 59.9 years, according to the National Institute for Health. Already, I feel like I’m beating the odds.

There is evidence to support the notion that older adults with disabilities are subject to discrimination in health care.

So far, I haven’t experienced anything resembling this. However, I have found that doctors are far too fast paced for me, and collectively they could potentially control my life if I do everything they tell me to do..

Whatever hope I enjoy comes from optimism based on things unseen, wishful thinking or maybe delusions. It’s hard to be 60, alone and not keeping up. My living situation appears precarious and possibly doomed, yet I still need to keep the fire burning.

I see this as a “cosmic test,” an agnostic version of “God’s test.” This is serious business because if you slip up, you can suffer real consequences and reap a bad result.

So far, I know that I’m doing a lot of things correctly, and it’s likely that I’m getting enough things right so that I will ultimately pass that test.

I’m sure that there are higher purposes to my existence. Still, I would rather have comfort, security and plentitude if it’s possible, but. I guess I’ll have to keep trying and see how it goes.

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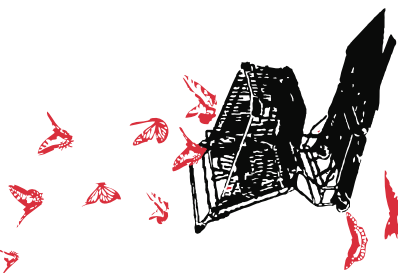
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