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# I'VE BURIED 17 FRIENDS. SWEEPS WON'T STOP THE NEXT FUNERAL.

SISTER 'NITA HOUSE

*San Francisco's "drug-free sidewalks" plan won't save lives—it will cost them. Housing and harm reduction are the only way forward.*

I have buried 17 friends in two years. Fentanyl stole their breath. If punishment or shame could end addiction, they would still be here. But San Francisco's new "drug-free sidewalks" plan does only that: punishes the poor, shames people in crisis, and hides suffering instead of healing it.

Mayor Daniel Lurie's "Recovery First" law makes abstinence the City's guiding star. Nonprofits that once handed out clean syringes or pipes are now forced to attach treatment counseling or else lose funding. It sounds neat on a press release. In reality it drives people into the shadows. When folks use behind dumpsters instead of in public view, overdoses turn fatal because no one is there to call for help. That isn't recovery. That's a death sentence.

Then there are the RV bans and endless sweeps, which create similar risks. Towing someone's only shelter and issuing them tickets doesn't create sobriety—it creates trauma. It tears apart what little stability people have and dumps them back on the sidewalk, bruised, exhausted, and further from help than before. That's not "breaking the cycle." That's perpetuating a vicious cycle.

Here's what we know actually works: Housing First. Give people a home without strings attached and they stabilize. They use less. They live longer. The evidence is overwhelming. "Sober-only" shelters that expel you for relapsing aren't housing at all. They are revolving doors back to the street.

Carlos, a man I know who has been unhoused for years, wants recovery but can't meet the rigid rules of a sober shelter. Under

Housing First, he'd have his own place and support at his pace. Under the mayor's plan, he stays outside, battling trauma with no chance to rest or heal. Tell me which option sounds like recovery.

Harm reduction doesn't cause drug use—it keeps people alive long enough to choose recovery. Supervised consumption sites save lives. Syringe access prevents HIV. Narcan brings people back from the brink. Abstinence can be beautiful, but only when it's freely chosen.

Try choosing recovery when your tent is trashed, your body is cold and your pockets hold nothing but citations.

If the mayor truly wanted fewer funerals, he would invest in permanent supportive housing, voluntary treatment, supervised consumption and peer outreach. Instead, he's funding

sweeps, slogans and further criminalization of poverty.

As a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence, I believe in radical hospitality. San Francisco is measured not by how it looks in a press release, but by how it treats people at their worst hour. Right now, we are failing. "Drug-free sidewalks" won't save lives. Housing, dignity and compassion will.

I'm tired of funerals. I don't want to bury another friend. Join me in demanding that this city chooses evidence over cruelty, and compassion over soundbytes. Demand Housing First. Demand harm reduction. Demand life.

Sister 'Nita House is a volunteer at the Coalition on Homelessness and a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. This editorial reflects their own viewpoint and not necessarily any organizations they're affiliated with.

**"Drug-free sidewalks aren't recovery. They're a death sentence."**

**"If the mayor truly wanted fewer funerals, he would invest in housing, treatment and compassion—not sweeps and slogans."**

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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](mailto: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](mailto:lpierce@cohsf.org)

**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!**

# HOMELESS RESIDENTS REACT TO DONALD TRUMP’S THREATS TO CLEAR ENCAMPMENTS IN D.C.

MADI KOESLER

*With D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) now under federal control and the National Guard coming to D.C., the fate of people living in encampments remains up in the air.*

During a press conference on 11 August, President Donald Trump said that law enforcement had already begun to clear encampments, but Street Sense has been unable to confirm this, and had not seen any encampments removed as of that afternoon.

Homelessness outreach providers and the Department of Human Services (DHS) visited encampments along I-66 before the press conference to offer shelter and resources. DHS officials on site told residents, “from our perspective, we just want to make sure people are staying safe.”

This follows a Truth social post by Trump on 10 August with photos of tents along the interstate and of one person on the steps of the American Institute of Pharmacy on his way to golf.

Street Sense reporters spoke to

residents who live in the encampments along I-66 about their reactions to Trump’s announcement and threat to remove encampments.

“I ain’t ever bought no prostitutes. I ain’t never raped nobody. I ain’t never paid anybody off. None of that stuff,” said G, a resident from one of the photographed tents. “He’s much more of a criminal than I am.”

G says that the worst thing he does is drugs, and that he would willingly go to jail if Trump went with him. He moved to the green along the interstate because it felt safer than his apartment building. He’s found a community in his encampment over the last two months, but plans to move because of the attention from Trump and media outlets.

“They’ve been doing this to Black men since the dawn,” fellow encampment resident Franklin Lee said. “He don’t give a damn. He’s saying, ‘Fuck the Constitution.’”

Lee has lived outside for 10 years across D.C. He currently lives in a tent along I-66 outside the

Kennedy Center. Over the decade, he has developed a distrust for law enforcement and Trump – feeling let down by how the government treats people who aren’t “billionaires and trillionaires”.

Lee doesn’t identify with either political party but says that Trump is the first president he has ever wanted to give the finger to before. If he is forced to move his tent, he says that he plans to give the government a piece of his mind.

“I pray for America and the presidency on a daily basis. I pray for peace,” resident George Morgan said. “I believe there’s a lot that could be done.”

Morgan also lives in one of the tents posted by Trump in the Truth social post along his commute to Trump’s National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia. Morgan is from D.C. and lived along the interstate for about two months with his dog Blue.

He is interested in moving into shelter but doesn’t want to leave Blue behind. As he stays at his encampment, Morgan is optimistic that Mayor Muriel Bowser might be able to come to an agreement with Trump.

Bowser addressed the press just after

3pm on 11 August, telling District residents that the MPD will comply with the law but noting that D.C. has not experienced a crime spike since 2023. She confirmed that she contacted Attorney General Pam Bondi, who was tapped by Trump to “take command” of MPD.

The mayor also noted that all law enforcement must be identifiable by a “uniform, a badge, a jacket, so that people know that they are law enforcement.” This comes after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have been seen across the nation wearing masks and unidentifiable clothing.

When asked specifically about encampment clearings and if Chief Pamela Smith will comply if Bondi directs local law enforcement to arrest or move people experiencing homelessness out of D.C., Bowser replied, “Well, let me just say what MPD needs to be focused on, and it’s violent crime. ... Our force, when the chief deploys, every day and every night, is focused on people who are committing crimes in the District.”

Franzi Wild contributed reporting.

Courtesy of Street Sense Media / INSP. ngo

# RULES OF THE ROAD: RV DWELLERS DESERVE ANSWERS ON SF’S NEW PERMIT SYSTEM

CHARLIE FISCH

When I work with vulnerable populations at risk of further marginalization, I often don’t have answers to people’s pressing questions. When RV residents ask whether or not they will be able to stay in their homes for another year, it feels almost irresponsible to answer without concrete information. I’ve spent the last three months knocking on RV doors, trying to give RV residents access to local government and warn them of just how little the City has to offer. Every conversation usually ends with questions about how to receive a permit, a natural one for someone about to lose their home. For Latinx residents, the prospect of losing one’s home at a time when private space is essential to avoiding contact with

immigration enforcement is particularly cruel. RV residents have repeatedly expressed their fear, uncertainty and anger at being forced into instability. They fear their children taking on the burden of finding safe shelter, losing their belongings, and being subject to immigration and law enforcement for being visibly unhoused and Latinx.

The oversize vehicle refuge permit program, which the City espoused as a “compassionate and humane” approach to vehicular homelessness, exempts RV residents who were counted in city limits between May 22 and May 25 from enforcement of the two-hour parking limit for up to one year. From the beginning, the construction of the permit program ignored the realities and needs of RV residents, who were never consulted in the creation of the permit or accompanying legislation. The permit does not allow people who were not counted initially to appeal, despite the short time frame of the city’s count. Facing constant enforcement from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and the SF Police Department, RV residents constantly move along, making them difficult to locate and contact. Codifying an appeals process that gives RV residents who were missed in the count the opportunity to keep their homes and avoid being pushed onto the street without any services is the least the city can do if it professes to “lead with compassion.”

The permit program also includes a nebulous Good Neighbor Policy that

dictates public health and safety guidelines for RV residents. Without safe parking sites, power hookups and publicly available waste disposal facilities, most RV residents are left with few options. Housed residents also see RV hotspots as opportunities to dump and litter, leaving RV residents with the responsibility of cleaning up after everyone, at risk of being punished. The current policy lacks even a draft of the Good Neighbor Policy and clarity on the procedure for revoking permits. The SFMTA Board has the opportunity to give RV residents leniency when it comes to violations of the Good Neighbor Policy. They should require solid proof of repeated violations, and dictate that permits only be revoked in serious issues of life and safety, creating more safeguards to prevent RV residents from ending up on the street.

These changes are vital to the RV plan; they soften the blow of a short-sighted and half-baked plan that will overload the city’s already strained homelessness system and endanger hundreds of vulnerable individuals. A permit that is truly dignified and compassionate is a form of harm reduction, both for those in RVs who will get to keep a stable situation for longer, and those on the street who will be able to access services faster.

The SFMTA amendments to the permit are also a vital part of the legislative process that the Board of Supervisors are requesting when it resumes in September. While the Supervisors have requested these amendments, Mayor

Daniel Lurie’s office is attempting to prevent the SFMTA from making these crucial amendments. The unjust and fascist expansion of executive power in American politics is not exclusive to the federal level; efficiency and control are also key aspects of Lurie’s administration. We all condemn the centralization of power on the federal level, yet we encourage it in our own City when it comes to eliminating visible poverty. Good policy does not come from circumventing legislative processes in favor of surface-level results—it requires community input and revisions. There’s no shame in producing an imperfect policy, and the most humane and compassionate thing the mayor’s office can do is cop to the plan’s flaws and assist in remedying them.

The mayor’s office should not have ultimate authority on the final form of all public policy in San Francisco, particularly when the Board of Supervisors has already recommended and passed amendments. The mayor’s office has the power to preserve San Francisco’s legislative process by sending the permit program back to the SFMTA Board. It owes that to its vehicularly housed constituents as much it does to structurally housed ones.

*Charlie Fisch (they/he) is an intern at the Coalition on Homelessness, the San Francisco-based homeless advocacy organization that publishes Street Sheet.*



# ArtAuction25

## the countdown continues

Join us Thursday September 11, 2025 at the SOMArts Cultural Center from 5:30pm-10pm! Get your tickets before it's too late and join us or a night of art, community, food, drink and music!

Bid online on hundreds of art pieces at a variety of prices and styles starting on September 2 at noon & join us in person to see performances from Francisco Herrera Band & DJ Prince Saves.

*Francisco Herrera is a prolific singer-songwriter and cultural worker whose music fuses social justice with soul, spanning genres from norteño and mariachi to electro-cumbia, Latin rock, and Chicano soul. Growing up in the border town of Calexico, he cut his teeth singing rancheras and garage rock before channeling his musical gifts into movement work inspired by Liberation Theology. Whether performing for 250,000 protesters at the Battle of Seattle or in intimate circles with day laborers and survivors of violence, Herrera's songs uplift, teach, and agitate with bilingual power. His latest album, Honor Migrante, produced by Greg Landau, is a genre-bending celebration of immigrant dignity and resistance, weaving together traditional Mexican styles with post-modern sounds and searing political lyricism.*

Join us in person on September 11th for a night of celebration, community building, and beautiful art that you won't soon forget! Also, buy tickets for our raffle! Prizes include a free tattoo session, SF Giants tickets, and a getaway to Sonoma. See you there!



**Where:** SOMArts Cultural Center, 984 Brannan St. x 9th St, SF  
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# A COURAGEOUS STAND FOR THE MARVEL IN THE MISSION

JORDAN WASILEWSKI

In 1956, then-Senator and future President John F. Kennedy released a book called “Profiles In Courage” about elected leaders who took on difficult decisions because they believed they were right, rather than popular.

Almost 70 years later, it still seems as if courage is too short in supply in all levels of government. But, during the July 29 Board of Supervisors meeting, just before the August break, we saw a local profile in courage from District 9 Supervisor Jackie Fielder, as she led the smackdown on a frivolous appeal that attacked a site including permanent supportive housing.

The site at 1979 Mission St., in Fielder’s district, was slated to become “The Monster In The Mission,” a luxury high rise that was a gentrification bomb. Many activists, including me, opposed the project and pushed for community-based solutions. Eventually, the developer withdrew before the COVID-19 pandemic, making way for 100% deeply affordable housing at what is now called “La Maravilla,” or “the Marvel In The Mission.”

In a statement after the Board vote, Fielder gave neighborhood groups, such as United to Save the Mission, San Francisco Latino Task

Force and San Francisco Latino Parity and Equity Coalition, props for defending the community.

“Mission residents have been organizing for years to ensure that their families, elders, and unhoused neighbors can remain in the community they built,” Fielder said “This appeal erroneously challenged the development itself through an appeal of the parcel map subdivision.”

What was originally an arcane land use appeal turned into an infuriating policy discussion about the supposed impacts of permanent supportive housing on the community. Opposition to the new project transformed into concern trolling over how it will impact the nearby Marshall Elementary School. Marc Salomon, the appellant on record, told the Board parents and neighbors want more “higher-functioning” tenants. Other detractors made infuriating comments likening permanent supportive housing to drug treatment.

Salomon withdrew all parts of his appeal, except that which pertained to neighborhood impact, something the Planning Department admitted was outside the scope of its jurisdiction.

Sam Moss, executive director of the Mission Housing Development

Corporation and the project sponsor, tore into the appeal. “This appeal isn’t about protecting the neighborhood. It’s about protecting privilege,” he told the Board, adding how families are harmed more by the lack of affordable housing than the presence of permanent supportive housing.

“We should call it what it is: A weaponization of process in the service of exclusion,” Moss said.

At the hearing’s conclusion, Fielder told everyone to “buckle up,” because she had a lot to say.

Fielder emphasized on how she had always prioritized the safety of the 16th and Mission area, and that the complaints about security at permanent supportive housing are misdirected, citing the Board approving \$50 million on police overtime while permanent supportive housing lacks adequate security. She also recalled her own childhood growing up in a high crime neighborhood, and stressed the importance of real public safety.

She also excoriated the concept of “abundance” which has become a buzzword for moderate Democrats. She asked “abundance for whom,” and expressed that abundance should be shared along the most vulnerable.

I often criticize elected officials, but I also like to give them credit for doing something right. I applaud Myrna Melgar of District 7 for speaking about how her work in the Mission with drug users is not a new issue and Shamann Walton of District 10 for validating concerns of both permanent supportive housing residents and their neighbors.

Perhaps, this could be a model for expanding permanent supportive housing in other neighborhoods. There are plenty of us tenants who don’t bring our issues outside the home who would make great neighbors in any neighborhood, and I want to see more supervisors push for improving and expanding permanent supportive housing, even when it is tough to do so.

It takes courage to make lasting change. When people remain housed in the permanent supportive housing part of the Marvel, when tenants like myself act as good neighbors, when issues that happen are handled in a non-carceral way while keeping seniors, families and other vulnerable communities whole, opponents will forget it was ever controversial.

## WHEN HAVING A KITCHEN IS MORE THAN I DESERVE

TATIANA LYULKIN

I became “vulnerable” very late in life, after my parents died in 2014 and in 2016, and I lost what was basically “their” apartment in Daly City in 2017. I’m not spoiled or lazy, just disabled. So with my parents gone, my Social Supplemental Income check is my only source of income. But last month I got a letter from the SSI telling me I was overpaid and I owe them \$10,000 because my studio has a kitchen.

In the four years that I’ve had my studio I bought a bed, a blender, a cheap camera and a CD player. I still don’t have a TV, a computer, a printer or an iPad. All of my furniture is gifted and my dishes and appliances come from Goodwill. I have no savings account, no stocks and bonds, no life insurance, no car—not even a bicycle. What else am I supposed to NOT HAVE to be left alone? Why is having a

kitchen more than I deserve? And how is it possible that a person in my situation owes the SSI \$10,000 when I never ASKED it to increase my monthly allowance??? Somebody please make this make sense to me.

In 2021 my rent was \$195; in 2023, it increased to \$270. Maybe this is not exactly a huge trauma if you have multiple sources of income, however small they might be. But what if the SSI or the Social Security Disability Insurance monthly check is your ONLY source of income? How am I supposed to close that gap? “Oh, we don’t know. Somehow,” social services might suggest. “Get a roommate.” This nonsense is not a solution. It’s more like kindergarten.

I firmly believe that when it comes to the people like me who’re truly all alone in this

world, our stable housing solutions should include housing. Even if it’s just a room with a communal kitchen and a shared bathroom, or working as a supervisor or a cook at a homeless shelter, a sober living house or a group home that also provides me with housing.

Nobody in their right mind wants their reality to include being homeless, addicted to meth, disabled or ending up totally alone. But it happens and for the SSI to blame its clients for the things that are clearly NOT their fault is not productive or helpful.

Housing that you can be priced out of is not permanent housing or even stable housing—it’s a glorified homeless shelter. It’s not a permanent solution to the housing crisis—at least not for us.

# AMERICA, THE NEW BANANA REPUBLIC

PAUL BODEN

Let's be real about what's happening. The U.S. Government is endeavoring to solidify its long time quest of a fascist dictatorship rule. It's moving incredibly fast because the structures needed to pull this off have been getting implemented piecemeal and with purpose since the Reagan Revolution in 1980. So now they are ready to rock and roll.

Dictatorships always rely on a militarized police force to rain hell on a scapegoated minority that are "blamed" as the cause of whatever the authorities decide is going to put fear into their base and use that fear to stoke division and prejudice amongst people.

This militarized police force operates as an arm of a military engagement where no probable cause, due process or any of the civil rights people think protects them from government abuse or persecution. Masked, unbadged, heavily armed and using maximum force, soldiers are fast becoming America's new Community Policing Model. They/we didn't abolish the police, we militarized them. Couple this enforcement with new "black site prisons" being constructed on military bases across the country to incarcerate whoever they choose without due process—is a core facet of any dictatorship, and always has been.

At the same time, in order to ensure that the new "truth" can be spread and never discredited, all dictatorships know it is important to silence institutions that might challenge or fact check the information and documentation it spreads. So universities, public and commercial media, legal entities, and government agencies conducting research and documenting financial trends and data are defunded through public broadcasting, university grant and firing research staff at government

agencies and replacing them with sycophants.

With these structures in place the dictatorship can now go about the business of governing. Ensuring that the wealth of the country gets consolidated amongst a select core of institutions and cronies.

"Banana Republics" of South and Central America were countries operated as a private enterprise for the exclusive profit of the ruling class. The U.S. is certainly becoming the Banana Republic of 2025. To finance this, any and all public spending must be directly connected to profits for the ruling class.

Expenditures such as public welfare, education, health care, housing and environment are being and/or have already been eliminated. Since the U.S. Agency for International Development was shut down, over 90,000 children have died, and frankly the U.S. Government doesn't give a shit!! Just like it won't give a shit about the children and others at home when they eliminate access to Social Security, Medicaid, Housing, food stamps or a livable income. Some of these massive cuts will take effect immediately and some are being rolled out so as to truly hit people after the mid term elections in November 2026. But they are all coming, and that we know for damn sure.

\$880 billion in cuts to Medicaid means 17 million people will lose access to vital health care, 411,000 people are projected to lose their housing voucher subsidies (with 500,000 public housing units have

already been lost). Cuts to food stamps worth \$230 billion coupled with draconian work requirements in several programs mean more people will be living with hunger in the richest country in the world. This is just a partial list to illustrate the breadth of oppression and brutality. Militarized police and immigration enforcement systems are created to protect dictators from the pain and suffering they cause as they hoard a country's wealth and resources.

***"Banana Republics" of South and Central America were countries operated as a private enterprise for the exclusive profit of the ruling class. The U.S. is certainly becoming the Banana Republic of 2025.***

Immigrants, trans community members, unhoused people, disabled people and people of color are the primary targets for oppression, but in a fascist dictatorship, we are all targets. So is anyone who is poor and all those who are not working to protect or enrich the ruling class. of people believe that they are the rightful benefactors of this

country's wealth. When a country operates as a private enterprise for the exclusive profit of the ruling class violence, fear and oppression are a core function of governing

When the Marine in LA says "Get used to it, we're here," he is telling us that this is the new norm. When Trump says, "We'll be going after everybody," he is telling us that what we're seeing is just part of a plan that we are not a part of. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has a goal to hire 10,000 agents, offering \$50,000 bonuses and paying \$60,000 towards student loans of applicants! These are not temp jobs; this is the new world order for America.

In this context, Trump's July 24

Executive Order on homelessness makes perfect sense. Entitled "Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets," it calls for forced treatment and civil commitment for people with mental health disabilities and mandates local governments to increase their sweeps and incarceration of unhoused people—or risk losing federal funding. Round them up, beat them up, lock them up and throw away the key!! We all know who "them" is: It's us!

True community groups and organizations are faced with the new reality we are living in, and need to figure out what we are going to do to support each other and build stronger and more universal alliances, messaging and campaigns.

We need to do this, 1) to survive and 2) to fight the incredible amount of truly dictatorial shit happening to all sorts of communities right now, and surely into the immediate future. We all know shit has been really bad for a long while already, but it is going to get a whole lot worse and we need each other to survive. It's not just homeless based groups, all of us need to seriously think about our organizing strategies under the current fascist regime.

As Pete White from LA Community Action Network wrote recently, "We are awake. And let this awakening be the beginning of a new chapter—a chapter where we reclaim the truth, where we demand justice, and where we refuse to allow any person or institution to strip us of our humanity. So, let us stand together, with heads held high and hearts fierce."

*Paul Boden is the co-founder and executive director of the Western Regional Advocacy Project (wraphome.org)*

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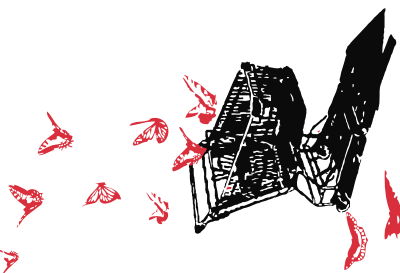
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