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# STREET SHEET



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## CELEBRATE BLACK FUTURES

## HONOR BLACK HISTORY



REAL  
BLACK  
HISTORY

2

BEING  
HOMELESS  
IS AN  
EMERGENCY

3

PIT STOP  
TOILETS

4

LA FIRES

5

THE  
ENDURING  
LEGACY OF  
US SLAVERY

6

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH OR THANKING THE SLAVES FOR MAKING AMERICA GREAT

BILAL MAFUNDI ALI

For many people, especially Black people, the month of February signifies the annual celebration of Black History Month/African-American Heritage Month. February is designated as a time to recognize African American achievements and contributions to America. One notable consequence is the hero worship of a handful of prominent figures. What's more, this celebration of Black achievement particularly tends to be sanitized, and this selective representation is often at the expense of erasing a rich legacy of individuals, groups, and movements just as important in the legacy of Black struggle.

Every year since 1929, the month of February has been observed as Black History Month by scholars, students, churches and the corporate world. Many people feel that it is important that we honor those who faced with almost insurmountable challenges and barriers to "overcome." Many believe that Black History should be celebrated year-round, not just one month of the year and the shortest month of the year at that, as it's no different from American history. After all, Black History is amerikkklan his-tory, in which, without Black people there would no American history.

Negro History Week (1926), the precursor to Black History Month, was created in 1926 in the United States, when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February to be "Negro History Week." Woodson was bothered by the fact that many textbooks and other historical reviews minimized or ignored the contributions of black figures. When Carter G Woodson proposed Negro History Week, he explained, "If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated." Woodson earmarked the second week in February to raise awareness of our stories. Woodson chose that week because it specifically covered the birthdays of Frederick Douglass (February 14) and Abraham Lincoln (February 12).

There is no shortage of ways to celebrate Black History Month. Teachers give lessons to students about important African American historical figures such as Harriet Tubman and the Tuskegee Airmen. Bookstores highlight the works of black poets and writers. Meanwhile, galleries display the work of black artists. Museums feature exhibitions with African-American themes, and theaters present plays with an African American subject matter. At the same time Black History Month is being celebrated with all its pageantry, it fails to acknowledge the historic ongoing struggles for Black people's self-determination and liberation. Is this because Black History Month has been successfully co-opted by corporate America and the petty black bourgeois? KKKapitalism co-opts the post-holiday

sales slump that usually follows New Year's Day, when retailers honor holidays in hopes of boosting revenue while adjusting their products and services to commemorate Black History Month. Target, Verizon, Google and Netflix, along with alcoholic beverage companies, display Great African Kings such as Budweiser's advertisement. Ironically, many of these corporations have derived their great wealth from that "peculiar institution" known as slavery. This involvement by these corporations has had the effect of rendering Black History Month a token gesture.

"We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society - Point 5 of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense Platform."

Black history is amerikkklan history. A history of kidnapping, a history of genocidal practices, a history of suffering, murder, brutality, marginalization, containment, control and the exploitation and oppression of Black people in amerikkka. Black History Month has never been about black folks understanding their oppressive conditions in this kkkountry. Black History Month has become the month of the "good negro," totally erasing the history and contributions of Black freedom fighters such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Robert Williams, Ella Baker, Queen Mother Moore and others who waged militant opposition against the U.S. empire. Black History Month has become a whitewashing of the historical relationship between people of Afrikan descent and white supremacist America.

"Often black history is not recorded, it's forgotten about, this keeps us from knowing what direction to go in the future" - Huey P. Newton.

Black History is white domination of Black people and white people being entitled to rape, murder, exploitation and oppression of Black people as a divine right.

Black History is the denial of Black people's right to self-determination.

Black History is the criminalization of being black.

Black History is Black Lives have never mattered.

Black History is whites being able to escape into their whiteness, while making impossible for blacks to escape into their blackness.

Black History Month is about the Commercialization and Commodification of OurStory

REAL BLACK HISTORY MATTERS!!!

Reprinted from Street Sheet's February 15, 2018 edition

## HELP KEEP STREET SHEET IN PRINT!



SCAN ME

coalition.networkforgood.com

## 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.

Editor: TJ Johnston  
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The poem/illustration "Every Moment Counts" was submitted by author Sterling J. Sam. Street Sheet didn't credit them as the issue went to print as it should have and regrets the oversight.

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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!**

# IT'S AN EMERGENCY EVERY DAY WHEN YOU LIVE ON THE STREETS

TINY

**The flames of intense heat dehydrate**

**The water from floods drown our outside spaces**

**The Cold seeps into our torn clothes**

**Way down deep to our tired bones**

**The tornado winds**

**The sun beats in**

**The smoke will choke**

**But none so hard as the**

**Cop Cars**

**The park rangers and the DPW pickup**

**Yards**

**Who take it all**

**No matter who you call**

—excerpt from *The Emergency Called Sweeps*, by Tiny

“The roof (umbrella) blew off my home and the tarp blew away like a sail...” said Ruth Roofless, a houseless resident of Tovaangar (Los Angeles).

“They took our last tarp and all of our blankets. I have frostbite in my hands now and I can’t go to work,” said Sidney, a houseless resident, recycler and RoofLESS radio reporter in Yelamu (San Francisco) who had just suffered a sweep of all his warm clothes and sleeping bag.

Across the US the people impacted first and worst by climate change, or what Dine brother Klee Benally called Climate Terrorism, are houseless people, living, hiding, surviving on Mama Earth while unhoused.

Aetna Street in Van Nuys with fire looming (photo by AetnaStreetSolidarity on IG)

Right now, Los Angeles fires have consumed miles and miles of the county, have displaced at least 200,000 people and destroyed more than 12,000 homes and businesses including entire residential neighborhoods and so far have caused 16 fatalities.

The Veterans Affairs Medical Center “relocated” already houseless, disabled veteran residents from its community-living facility on the north campus to homelessness again.

Aetna street houseless community is facing a threat of evacuation from their humble outside area in Van Nuys that they have already been violently removed and evicted from multiple

times.

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene swept over Western North Carolina, bringing record levels of rainfall. Rainfall totals reached 12 to 16 inches in some areas, leading to what is now referred to as one of the most severe floods in the state’s recent history.

Entire streets where houseless elders would sit or stand in that state were flooded and the few homeless shelters spaces were closed. Houseless peoples were pushed into more unsafe homelessness.

It’s rarely mentioned when these increasingly common disasters occur how they impact houseless residents.

In fact, houseless peoples are never mentioned or discussed except in some vague amorphous way as though we are all a monolith called the “homeless people” with no face or name or identity except our lack of secure housing.

California these days, where can we, who are already evacuated, removed, swept, and evicted people, go?

The other terrorism we face is the terrorism of criminalization. Since June of last year after the Grants Pass versus Johnson Supreme Court ruling, every city in the US has waged an un-ending and deadly war on houseless peoples bodies.

No matter where we sit, stand, walk or god forbid, try to sleep, we are forcibly evacuated, removed—only we have nowhere to go.

In California Governor Gavin Newsom has threatened cities to remove and sweep or lose their state funding. Local mayors of San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno, Sacramento, Berkeley, and Los Angeles, to name a few, have implemented their own endless attacks on houseless peoples bodies as well as new laws on top of the old laws that criminalize our existence, and the result is houseless peoples don’t dare to rest for fear of removal. From everywhere.

“The city of Oakland is towing houseless peoples RV’s in Estuary Park, they are not giving them any referrals to safe parking places, even though they have nowhere else to go,” Oakland Revealed reported out from a highway in East Oakland this week.

Across the City of Oakland every single day under the guise of “encampment management” hundreds of houseless Oakland residents are subjected to violent sweeps with subsequent arrests if they don’t comply, resulting in the loss of most if not all of their belongings, no matter how important or necessary they are.

In San Francisco, you can’t even sit down or put

up a tent without facing forced removal, meaning that when the rain and cold comes you have no protection.

“I almost died in a fire (2018) and I have lasting breathing issues and can’t run for my life like I was able to then, I know the evacuation warnings are for people with phones and power and cars who can stay in hotels...they’re not for we the unhoused (who they then arrest under curfew orders)” concluded Ruth RoofLess.

In this terrifying and dangerous time poor and houseless peoples have proposed actual solutions. Solutions rooted in right relationship with Mama Earth, Solutions created by the people impacted first and worst by climate terrorism and the violent criminalization of our bodies. Solutions that actually house and heal, not harm and hurt.

On December 17th, several houseless peoples



Whether it’s fires or floods, hurricanes or tornadoes, we are dangerously impacted by these severe weather changes. As I often repeated in the Covid pandemic, and some of our California wildfire emergencies, “How do we shelter in place when we don’t have a place?”

From the air we can’t breathe to the heat or water we can’t escape from, our lean-to’s, tarps, tents and/or cardboard motels are destroyed, blown-off, lost or crushed in torrential rains. Our lungs get no rest from smoke or soot. We have no windows to close, no air conditioners or purifiers to turn on or outlets to plug them into and rarely any covered areas or trees to shade under to get cool in extreme and dangerous heat.

And when there are violent hurricanes like in Western North Carolina or never-ending fires like the reality of LA right now and much of

# I MANAGE SF'S 'PIT STOP' PROGRAM— HERE'S WHY PUBLIC BATHROOMS MATTER

**HOLLIE  
GARRETT**

**Disclosure:** *Hollie Garrett works as a manager for San Francisco's Pit Stop program.*

San Francisco's Pit Stop program is a public restroom program that also provides used needle receptacles and dog waste bags. The program has become a critical component in addressing public sanitation and a safer environment for both the city's homeless and local residents. The Pit Stop program was started as a pilot program in response to complaints of feces littered throughout the city's streets, with a high concentration in the Tenderloin district. The Pit Stop provides monitors at each facility to assure a clean and safe environment that fosters dignity for users while promoting cleanliness in public spaces.

Before the implementation of the Pit Stop program, San Francisco contracted with French company JC Decaux in 1995 to place self-cleaning units throughout the city. These units were often misused and poorly maintained, and infamously came to be known as "20-minute hotels" due to their frequent use for drug consumption and other activities. In 2014, the six-month Pit Stop pilot program was launched by San Francisco Public Works with three monitored units in the

Tenderloin. Due to the success of this pilot program and the need to provide a solution to the rise in feces-related calls, the program expanded in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pit Stop facilities are now spread across 30 different locations in 13 districts throughout San Francisco. The units are made up of portable restrooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, traditional Porta Potties and self-cleaning units.

But for Daniel Rejes, a man living on the streets of San Francisco, the facilities are a double-edged sword.

"I don't use them often," Daniel said. "I've had bad experiences where I felt profiled by the monitors, like they thought I was going to use drugs in there."

However, Daniel recognizes the safety and cleanliness the Pit Stop provides. "For public restrooms, they're kept clean and it's good to see people maintaining them regularly," he said. But Daniel expresses concern about access, claiming that monitors sometimes deny use to people who appear homeless or falsely report the facility is out of order.

Another unhoused person named Preston also admitted he often feels profiled by the attendants. "I understand that it's certain people out here who make it hard for people like me," Preston said. "But it can still be frustrating when you are trying to use the restroom."

Tony, who has worked as a Pit Stop monitor for five months, shared the challenges and responsibilities of his role.

"My job is to make sure the restrooms stay clean and safe for everyone. I check after each person to make sure it's ready for the next user," Tony explained.

When asked about safety concerns, Tony recalled several incidents, including assisting a person who overdosed and witnessing another monitor get threatened with a gun. Despite these experiences, Tony remains committed to the job.

"I've had people thank me or offer me food and coffee, which I politely decline but it feels good to know the work is appreciated," he said.

For local residents, the presence of monitors has created a sense of safety and order. Derrick Bockner, a former employee of SF Clean witnessed the transformation firsthand.

"Before the monitors, it was chaos," Derrick said. "Now people feel safe and the streets are cleaner."

Susan, a resident near Washington Square, also shared gratitude. "With the monitors here, everything stays in order," she said. "Without them, it would be crazy."

Susan shared her perspective on the Pit Stop program's

impact on public cleanliness. "Even if someone uses the restroom on the street, someone has to clean it up. At least this way it's more humane," she said.

In the same spirit, downtown resident Jamie Blakburnel described the facilities as an effective solution for city sanitation and public safety. However, Jamie suggested how the City could improve on efficiency. "The City should invest in its own facilities instead of relying on contractors. It could save on cost and create more jobs," he said.

A common consensus among all those who provided comment about the Pit Stop was the desire to see the program expanded. Jamie advocated for additional restrooms. Derrick agreed there should be more restrooms but suggested they bring more Porta Potty-style units instead of white trailers because they break down too often. Even Daniel recognized that there should be more units in the city, while Susan emphasized the importance of maintaining the current standard of cleanliness and safety.

While the Pit Stop program does not address the root causes of homelessness, it offers a solution to sanitation, public health and overall community safety.

Jamie agreed with this sentiment, and believes there's still much to be done regarding access, harm reduction and resources for those living on city streets.

"The bathrooms are an obvious solution to the restroom problem," Jamie said. "But we should also be addressing the issues that put people on the street in the first place."

*Hollie "Wali" Garrett III is a communications major at SFSU and advocate of criminal justice reform, addressing systemic issues through writing and media. He creates work that amplifies marginalized voices and explores justice and human rights.*



# HOW THE LA FIRES COULD EXACERBATE CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

MARISA KENDALL/CALMATTERS

Jennielynn Holmes stood in the middle of a make-shift evacuation center when the scope of the crisis hit her.

Surrounded by thousands of people that had just fled the Tubbs Fire that burned through Santa Rosa in 2017, Holmes realized many of these people would soon be added to the area's already extensive caseload of unhoused clients.

"This is the group of people (that) is one crisis away from entering homelessness," thought Holmes, who helps lead the area's homelessness response as CEO of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. "And the crisis is here."

As multiple wildfires continue to incinerate homes and displace tens of thousands of people in Los Angeles County, experts worry about the long-term effects the fires will have on the state's already dire homelessness crisis. In other parts of California burned by past wildfires, communities are still dealing with the fallout years later.

People who had too little or no insurance on their homes, or who rented, sometimes end up on the street when their home burns and they can't find another place to live.

But it's not just people whose homes burn down that feel the pain. Renters in undamaged buildings get evicted because their landlord raises rents to take advantage of refugees' desperation — or because the landlord lost another home in the fire and needs to move into their rental unit.

"It's really putting a strain on all of California at this point."

Matt Plotkin, director of equity and advocacy, United Way of Northern California

And when a community loses thousands of homes at once, when they already have a housing shortage, prices go up across the board, displacing even more people. To make the situation worse, each fire threatens to raise already sky-high home insurance rates, making rebuilding or buying a new home even more prohibitively expensive.

As climate change leads to hotter and drier seasons in California, these wildfires have become more unpredictable and extreme. Each new, devastating fire sets the state back in its fight against homelessness.

"It's really putting a strain on all of

California at this point," said Matt Plotkin, who helped lead recovery efforts for the 2018 Camp Fire in Butte County as head of what is now the Camp Fire Collaborative, before landing in his current role as director of equity and advocacy for United Way of Northern California.

The fires in Los Angeles County have burned more than 40,000 acres, killed at least 24 people and damaged or destroyed an estimated 12,000 homes and other structures — a loss sure to further exacerbate the housing shortage in a county that already has more than 75,000 homeless residents. While much of the attention around the current fires has been on destruction in the wealthy enclave of Pacific Palisades, experts say the rich won't be the only ones affected.

An analysis of three past California wildfires sheds some light on what might happen once the smoke clears in Los Angeles County.

## CAMP FIRE

After the 2018 Camp Fire destroyed



A worker walks among the debris at Evergreen Mobile Home Park in Paradise on Oct. 1, 2019. Nearly eleven months after the Camp Fire, California Recycle and other agencies are still working to remove wildfire debris from the area. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

much of the rural town of Paradise in Butte County, thousands of evacuees poured into Chico, about 15 miles away. Now, more than six years later, the Sacramento Valley city still feels the effects.

"We are still dealing with people being now, unfortunately, chronically houseless due to the Camp Fire," Plotkin said. "The impact, I would not use the word 'impacted' because that is past tense. I would say it is still current, present. So I still say 'impact.'"

Paradise lost about 15,000 homes in the fire. So far, only about 2,900 single-family homes and 550 multi-family units have been rebuilt, according to Mayor Steve Crowder. The loss had a large ripple effect. After the fire, vacancy rates in Butte County dropped to 1% or less, according to the county's 2023 homeless point-in-time count report.

The fire also made life more difficult for people who were already homeless in Paradise. Before the fire, the town had a few homeless shelters operated by local churches. Those are all gone now, Crowder said.

Immediately after the fire, Paradise passed an ordinance allowing survivors to live in trailers or RVs on their burned-out properties while they rebuild. It was supposed to be a temporary measure, but, in many cases, rebuilding took years as people waited for slow-moving insurance, federal funds and money from a settlement with PG&E to reach them. About 100 trailers remain — and some have no sewage hookup, creating unsanitary conditions, Crowder said.

The town soon will have to figure out how to remove those trailers and try to find permanent housing for their occupants, he said.

## CZU LIGHTNING COMPLEX

The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex, made up of multiple fires sparked by lightning strikes, destroyed nearly 700 homes in Santa Cruz County.

Four years later, only about a third of

those residences were being rebuilt, according to a 2024 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury report.

For several years, people displaced either directly or indirectly by the fires showed up at homeless service provider Housing Matters asking for help, said the nonprofit's Chief Initiatives Officer Tom Stagg. While no one collected comprehensive data on how many people became homeless specifically because of the fire, the anecdotal evidence was everywhere, he said.

"I remember definitely seeing an increase in RVs that people were staying in in town for up to two years after the fire," he said.

The CZU fires tore through rural communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains, including the San Lorenzo Valley, which used to be an affordable refuge for people priced out of other areas, Stagg said. Losing homes there has made the region's affordable housing crisis even worse, he said.

In addition, people burned out of the Santa Cruz Mountains — or trying to escape the threat of fire there — moved into the city of Santa Cruz, stressing the city's housing market and bringing down the vacancy rate, said Robert Ratner, director of Santa Cruz County's Housing for Health.

It's common for people to migrate after a fire, traveling to places where they have friends and family, or where they believe they can find affordable housing. That fact makes every California wildfire a regional — even statewide — event. Even before the CZU fires, Stagg's team saw people end up homeless in Santa Cruz after being displaced from Paradise by the Camp Fire.

"We are still dealing with people being now, unfortunately, chronically houseless due to the Camp Fire," Plotkin said.

Matt Plotkin, director of equity and advocacy, United Way of Northern California

It's difficult to track exactly how many people are made homeless by a fire, but as fires increasingly ravage California, some communities are interested in trying.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Santa Cruz County did not conduct a homeless census in the year after the CZU fires. Later counts asked participants about the primary reason they became homeless, listing

# NEW STUDY DEMONSTRATES THE ENDURING LEGACY OF US SLAVERY

NEIL K. R. SEHGAL AND ASHWINI SEHGAL

Legislators who are descendants of slaveholders are significantly wealthier than members of Congress without slaveholder ancestry, new research has found.

The legacy of slavery in America remains a divisive issue, with sharp political divides.

Some argue that slavery still contributes to modern economic inequalities. Others believe that its effects have largely faded.

One way to measure the legacy of slavery is to determine whether the disproportionate riches of slaveholders have been passed down to their present-day descendants.

Connecting the wealth of a slaveholder in the 1860s to today's economic conditions is not easy. Doing so requires unearthing data for a large number of people on slaveholder ancestry, current wealth and other factors such as age and education.

But in a new study, we tackled this challenge by focusing on one of the few groups of Americans for whom such information exists: members of Congress. We found that legislators who are descendants of slaveholders are significantly wealthier than members of Congress without slaveholder ancestry.

How slavery made the South rich  
In 1860, one year before the Civil War, the market value of US slaves was larger than that of all American railroads and factories.

At the time of emancipation in 1863, the estimated value of all enslaved people was roughly \$13 trillion in today's dollars.

The lower Mississippi Valley had more millionaires, all of them slaveholders, than anywhere else in the country.

Some post-Civil War historians have argued that emancipation permanently devastated slave-owning families.

More recently, however, historians discovered that, while the South fell behind the North economically immediately following emancipation, many elite slaveholders recovered financially within one or two generations.

They accomplished this by replacing slavery with sharecropping – a kind of indentured servitude that trapped Black farm workers in debt to white landowners – and enacting discriminatory Jim Crow laws that enforced racial segregation.

100 descendants of slaveholders  
Using genealogist-verified historical data and financial data from annual congressional disclosures, we examined members of the 117th Congress, which was in session from January 2021 to January 2023. Of its 535 members, 100 were descendants of slaveholders, including Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren and Republican Senator Mitch McConnell.

Legislators whose ancestors were large slaveholders – defined in our study as owning 16 or more slaves – have a current median net worth over five times larger than their peers whose ancestors were not slaveholders: \$5.6 million vs. \$1.1 million. These results remained largely the same after accounting for age, race and education.

Wealth creates many privileges – the means to start a business or pursue higher education. – and intergenerational wealth transfers can allow these advantages to persist across generations.

Because members of Congress are a highly select group, our results may not apply to all Americans. However, the findings align with other studies on the transfers of wealth and privilege across generations in the US and Europe. Wealth, these studies find, often stays within rich families across multiple generations. Mechanisms for holding onto wealth include low estate taxes and access to elite social networks and schools. Easy entry into powerful jobs and political influence also play a part.

Privilege with power  
But members of Congress do not just inherit wealth and advantages. They shape the lives of all Americans. They decide how to allocate federal funds, set tax rates and create regulations.

This power is significant. And for those whose families benefited from slavery, it can perpetuate economic policies that maintain wealth inequality.

Beyond inherited wealth, the legacy of slavery endures in policies enacted by those in power – by legislators who may be less likely to prioritize reforms that challenge the status quo.

COVID-19 relief legislation, for example, helped to reduce child poverty by more than 70% while bringing racial inequalities in child poverty to historic lows. Congress failed to renew the program in 2022, plunging 5 million more children into poverty, most of them Black and Latino.

The economic deprivation still experienced by Black Americans is the flip side of the privilege enjoyed by slaveowners' descendants. The median household wealth of white Americans today is six times higher than that of Black Americans – \$285,000 versus \$45,000.

Meanwhile, federal agencies that enforce antidiscrimination laws remain underfunded. This limits their ability to address racial disparities.

The path forward  
As the enduring economic disparities rooted in slavery become clearer, a growing number of states and municipalities are weighing some form of practical and financial compensation for the descendants of enslaved people.

Yet surveys show that most Americans oppose such reparations for slavery. Similarly, Congress has debated slavery reparations many times but never passed a bill.

There are, however, other ways to improve opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations that could gain bipartisan backing.

A majority of Americans, both conservatives and liberal, support increased funding for environmental hazard screening, which assesses the potential impact of a proposed project. They also favor limits on rent increases, better public school funding and raising taxes on the wealthy.

These measures would help to dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate economic disparities. The role of Congress here is central.

Members of Congress do not bear personal responsibility for their ancestors' actions. But they have an opportunity to address both the legacies of past injustices and today's inequalities. By doing so, they can help to create a future where ancestral history does not determine economic destiny.

*Courtesy of The Conversation / INSP. ngo*

CONTRIBUTE TO  
**STREET SHEET**

**WRITING:** Write about your experience of homelessness in San Francisco, about policies you think the City should put in place or change, your opinion on local issues, or about something newsworthy happening in your neighborhood!

**ARTWORK:** Help transform ART into ACTION by designing artwork for STREET SHEET! We especially love art that uplifts homeless people, celebrates the power of community organizing, or calls out abuses of power!

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Have a keen eye for beauty? Love capturing powerful moments at events? Have a photo of a Street Sheet vendor you'd like to share? We would love to run your photos in Street Sheet!

VISIT [WWW.STREETSHEET.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-WRITING/](http://WWW.STREETSHEET.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-WRITING/)  
OR BRING SUBMISSIONS TO 280 TURK STREET TO BE CONSIDERED  
PIECES ASSIGNED BY THE EDITOR MAY OFFER PAYMENT, ASK FOR DETAILS!

# EMERGENCY ON THE STREETS

TINY

-led movements across California launched a state-wide sanctuary movement to respond to violence of sweeping peoples like we are trash. For five days we held sweeps free sanctuary spaces in all of the impacted cities to lift up these actual solutions.

Homefulness is poverty scholarship informed, rent-free forever healing housing. But it is also informed by ancient teachings and spiritual traditions of First Nations people. It is not rooted in more extraction like buildings made of wood and concrete, deep and violent cutting down of Mama Trees that we need to provide us all with urgently needed shade and coolness.

Homefulness Projects launch with community gardens where there used to be asphalt. The planting of Ancestor forests where there used to be parking lots. Sliding scale cafes with free food and diapers and produce for the whole community for free and Humetkas (Ohlone concept of emergency preparedness) to provide water and emergency support to the whole neighborhood when, not if, emergencies like the LA and Oakland Hills fires happen .

Solar and wind power so we don't have to continue to steal from and poison Mama Earth and babies in the Congo just to have energy.

Fire and Water and MamaEarth solutions based on Indigenous peoples' ancient teachings (which should have been followed in Tovaangar and must be implemented across Turtle Island.)

In addition HOMEfulness and Wood Street commons models include Liberation education for houseless youth and adults so we can all learn how to take care of mama Earth with humility and love for the next seven generations of fires and climate terrorism caused disasters that so many of us are complicit in enabling.

Homefulness is actively working to take parcels of MamaEarth off the extractive real estate speculative market by working with conscious lawyers at Sustainable Economies Law Center to create a liberation easement that ensures that land will only be used for rent-free forever housing and gardens and radical sharing and therefore humbly saving more mamatrees and safe spaces for all of us humans to benefit from.

Solutions like Homefulness are the answer with or without the compounded emergency of fires or tornadoes, because it's an emergency every day when you are houseless. Every day we have no home, no roof, no medicine, no toilets, no beds or safe places to sleep. Every day we have the emergency of PTSD from our trauma filled lives that is only compounded and made worse by just trying to stay alive everyday outside in the ongoing emergency called homelessness

Every day we are scared for our lives and subject to cold so intense we almost die. Every day we find ourselves outside, roofless without a dry blanket or a warm plate of food or a heater to stand next to or a swamp cooler to cool down next to.

Every day mutual aid warriors like Wood Street Commons, POOR Magazine, Aetna Street Solidarity, Punks With Lunch and Jtown-Action, Love and Justice in the Streets and so many more show up with love, resources, tents, sleeping bags, food and justice to radically share to houseless relatives. Oftentimes these beautiful love-workers (as we call them at POOR Magazine) are replacing what is procedurally stolen from houseless peoples daily. Without this support people would die at greater rates than they already do. It's up to six people dying on the streets in LA every day from the fire called homelessness.

In the end we must stop "responding" to emergencies as though they just started. We are living an emergency every day when we live outside.

Thanks to Ry and Ruth Roofless from Tovaangar and Oakland Revealed for contributions to this story.

To learn more about Homefulness and Poor and houseless peoples solutions to homelessness thru radical Redistribution come to PeopleSkool Degentrification / Decolonization two-day Seminar on zoom which happens twice a year- the next session is Jan 25/26 for more information go to [www.poormagazine.org/education](http://www.poormagazine.org/education). To redistribute now to Homefulness in Huchiun ( Oakland, SF or LA ) go to [poormagazine.org/donate](http://poormagazine.org/donate) to support Wood Street Commons project go to [www.woodstreetcommons.org](http://www.woodstreetcommons.org)

# FIRES EXACERBATE HOMELESSNESS

## CONT...

natural disaster as an option. Few people ever chose that answer, but Ratner thinks that may be because there are so many combined factors that lead to homelessness. For example, someone might be displaced by a fire, but it's ultimately their economic insecurity that prevents them from finding a new place to live.

Wording the question differently might produce better data, Ratner said.

"It feels like something we need to start asking about so we can get better information," he said.

Some rural counties in the far north of the state, where wildfires are frequent, already ask. In 2023, nearly a quarter of Siskiyou County's 507 homeless residents said they were homeless as a result of fire, according to the county's most recent point-in-time count.

### TUBBS FIRE

After the 2017 Tubbs Fire burned through Napa and Sonoma counties in the Bay Area's wine country, local service providers saw a spike in homelessness about a year and a half later, Holmes said.

Immediately after the fire, money and other aid from FEMA, the local and state government, and philanthropic organizations poured in. Many people were able to live doubled or tripled-up with friends or family for a period of time. But when the money ran out and those cramped living situations became unsustainable, people found themselves out on the street.

It's a situation that could repeat in Los Angeles County, Holmes said.

"It's incredibly challenging because you're dealing with a huge new homeless population," she said. "People who lost their homes are now technically homeless. So with already a crazy amount of people experiencing homelessness, particularly in Southern California, and now you add on potentially tens of thousands more."

After the Tubbs Fires, the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa (the organization Holmes runs) created a disaster case management team with up to 20 case managers, and wrote a disaster case management playbook. The organization thought it would be a temporary program. But the fires

continued, and it's now become a permanent fixture.

For several years following the fire, Sonoma County included fire-related questions in its annual homeless point-in-time count. The year after the disaster, more than a third of homeless survey respondents said their previous housing or sleeping location had been affected by the fire in some way — including 12% that said it had been burned or otherwise destroyed.

"It's incredibly challenging because you're dealing with a huge new homeless population. People who lost their homes are now technically homeless. So with already a crazy amount of people experiencing homelessness, particularly in Southern California, and now you add on potentially tens of thousands more."

Jennielynn Holmes, CEO, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa

The county also surveyed people who were housed, to determine how many people might be at risk of becoming homeless. The survey found about 7% of Sonoma County households had someone living with them temporarily in the year after the fire. Using that data, the researchers estimated that 21,482 people were living temporarily doubled-up. Of those, nearly 40% said they were living that way because they lost their housing as a direct result of the fire. An additional 11% said they lost their housing because their landlord moved in or the rent increased because of the fire.

The city of Santa Rosa has permitted 3,220 new residential units since the 2017 fire, according to city data. That includes more than 370 affordable units, said Megan Basinger, the city's director of housing and community services.

"We've seen more restricted units come online since the fire than I think we've ever seen," she said.

As Los Angeles County starts to think about rebuilding, no one is watching with more empathy than those who have been through it before, Holmes said.

"We just feel so much for what's going on down there because we know what it feels like," she said, "to watch a community you love just be taken away so quickly."

# WHAT TO DO IF ICE COMES TO YOUR DOOR



## DO NOT OPEN DOORS

ICE CAN NOT COME IN WITHOUT A SIGNED WARRANT. TELL THEM TO PASS THE WARRANT UNDER THE DOOR BEFORE YOU OPEN.



## REMAIN SILENT

ICE CAN USE ANYTHING YOU SAY AGAINST YOU IN YOUR IMMIGRATION CASE, SO CLAIM YOUR RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT!



## DO NOT SIGN

DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING ICE GIVES YOU WITHOUT TALKING TO AN ATTORNEY!



## REPORT THE RAID

**CALL RAPID RESPONSE HOTLINE: 1-844-724-3737**  
TAKE PICTURES, VIDEOS & NOTES



## FIGHT BACK

GET A TRUSTWORTHY ATTORNEY & EXPLORE ALL OPTIONS TO FIGHT FOR YOUR CASE. PROTECT YOUR FAMILY & NEIGHBORS!

# QUÉ HACER SI AGENTES DE ICE LLEGAN A TU PUERTA



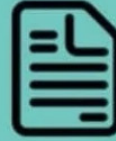
## NO ABRAS LA PUERTA

ICE NO PUEDE ENTRAR SIN UNA ORDEN JUDICIAL. DÍGALES QUE PASEN LA ORDEN POR DEBAJO DE LA PUERTA ANTES DE ABRIR.



## GUARDA SILENCIO

ICE PUEDE USAR CUALQUIER COSA QUE USTED DIGA EN SU CONTRA EN SU CASO DE INMIGRANTE, ASÍ QUE RECLAME SU DERECHO A PERMANECER EN SILENCIO



## NO FIRMES

NO FIRME NADA DE LO QUE ICE LE DÉ SIN HABLAR CON UN ABOGADO



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TOMA FOTOGRAFÍAS, VIDEOS Y NOTAS



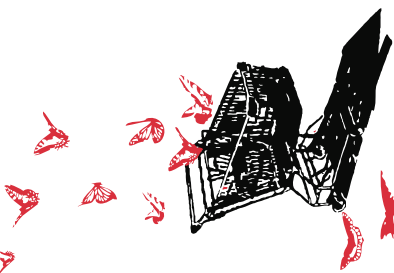
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Time: 4pm - 7pm

Planning Commission

Rm 400, City Hall

1 Dr Carlton B Goodlett Pl

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