

Issue: Florida, Affordable Housing, Elderly

Florida – Affordable Housing for the Elderly Talking Points

A Precarious Situation - The Federal Reserve lists home ownership in Florida as the lowest in three decades, the Florida Chamber of Commerce reports that workforce housing is a top concern for businesses across the state, while a **Harvard Report calls South Florida's rental affordability crisis the worst in the nation**. A minimum wage worker needs to work an 80-hour week to afford a one-bedroom apartment in many cities. Florida has the third highest homeless population in the nation at 36,000 people (a population that continues to grow), and **close to a million low income Florida households are severely housing cost-burdened**, spending more than half of their incomes on housing.

Elderly are an At-Risk Group - Of all low-income, cost-burdened households in Florida, more than 600,000 are headed by seniors. In a new AARP Foundation scorecard, **Florida ranks 46th among states in terms of accessibility and quality of long-term care for the aging and disabled**. It's a vicious cycle, with poor seniors who are severely cost-burdened spending 62% less on healthcare, and therefore creating a need for more expensive care down the line.

Affordable Housing is Within Reach - Created in 1992, a time when the state was almost entirely in the hands of Democrats, the **Sadowski Fund** was set up to address affordable needs through a document stamp tax on real estate transactions. The Sadowski fund has generated \$6 billion since its inception that *should have* all been used to create affordable housing for all Floridians through programs like SAIL and SHIP.

Republican Pillaging of the Sadowski Fund - Since 2003, a time when Republican control of the state was just starting to take hold, more than \$2 billion from the fund has been used for purposes other than affordable housing--in some years, the entirety of the budget was diverted. **2018 marks the 11th consecutive year that legislators took from housing funds to pay for other programs.**

An Economic Disaster - If these programs were funded as intended, and the money was not siphoned off elsewhere, they would create nearly **31,000 jobs and \$4.1 billion in positive economic impact.**

Republicans Stand in the Way of the Solution - Despite calls from citizens and legislators on both sides of the aisle, Republicans in the house, senate, and governor's mansion have stymied efforts to come up with a solution to a real crisis. Any bipartisan efforts to stop the practice of pillaging the fund have been stopped by Republicans (most recently SB 874 and HB 191).

Using Tragedy as a Reason to Deny Affordable Housing - Following the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, **the legislature threw out affordable housing in order to keep assault style weapons like the one used in the February 2018 tragedy.** The majority party would not yield to student demands that assault style weapons be outlawed and instead conceded to provide money for school security and some for mental health initiatives. In their reluctance to actually listen to the survivors, the legislature took two-thirds of state and local housing trust funds to pay for these conciliatory measures.

Floridians Have Had Enough - Millions of Floridians represented by diverse groups are urging legislators to fully allocate the housing trust funds to housing endeavors: business groups such as the Florida Chamber of Commerce, industry groups such as the Florida Realtors, advocates for the elderly such as Florida AARP, and faith-based organizations such as Volunteers of America Florida. **Their message is simple: "use the housing trust funds solely for housing."**