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people living without housing, I don't see how you can disregard the dramatic impact and effect that these massive federal cuts had on the living conditions of people in local communities.

I.B.: *How has the lack of federal funding affected local communities in tackling the issues of homelessness and housing?*

P.B.: It has divided and conquered a hell of a lot of them.

The 10-year plan to end homelessness was going to end homelessness. The five-year plans during the Clinton Administration were going to end it before that.

The public gets this messaging about homelessness initiatives, but across the country, 10-year plans are 12 years old. The situation, for families especially, is worse.

You have this disinformation in order to make local governments feel like we are addressing the problem, or at the very least giving the pretense that they are addressing it. The public receives these messages through the newspaper, on the radio, and on TV, so it must be true.

When these plans fail to achieve their goals, the public begins to think that people experiencing homelessness must be dysfunctional. We have really reinforced that it's their alcoholism, or mental health, their laziness, their sloth, their viciousness, they're sexual predators. They are other than us. Which is where the criminalization of the homelessness comes into play.

The one thing we seem to have no shortage of funding for is jail, police, and security. You create an "Us vs. Them" atmosphere and then the answer is to get rid of them. To make homeless people disappear.

The problem that they're finding (and this was true in the Depression era with the Anti-Okie laws and Sundown Towns) is that if you're not stopping the floodgates of people that are ending up on the street, your policing of them becomes never ending.

I.B.: *How do you think we can combat that? What can local government, advocates, and communities do?*

P.B.: All of us that are participating in the ten-year planning processes and in the local homeless coordinating boards and in the delivery of services from the funding that is available, we should all stop and say, 'You know what? We don't just need more hollowed out homeless plans. We need federal funding for affordable housing.'

It took local communities doing organizing that created what we now call HUD in the first place. That wasn't that long ago, it was 1937. That's within one generation. It was created because government was forced to respond to the needs of local communities.

We need to elect local representatives that will fight with the government on our behalf and then get them elected to the federal level once they do it. We have a

poster from 1936 where the Mayor of New York had images of homelessness that said, 'Must we always have this?' Now the Mayor of New York is touting broken windows and hiring guards to patrol subways to make sure there are no fare evaders, but primarily to make sure there are no homeless people sleeping on the subways.

Is the Mayor of New York honestly pushing for the restoration of this funding? No. And back in 1936 mayors were pushing to create state and federal programs to support housing.

We can't sit around and think that Obama's going to fix it; it's not going to come from the sky. It has to come from the community that says these are rights that we're equally entitled to. Why would you not want a government that says housing, healthcare and education are values that we all are entitled to? We have no problem with businesses making a profit, that's a significant priority within government. If there's no profit for any corporation in the equation with our public parks, schools, housing system, healthcare system, it's not a priority for our government. A perfect example of this on issue of housing is the mortgage interest reduction action programs up that spend more than \$140 billion a year.

I.B.: *Let's talk about the housing mortgage interest reduction program.*

P.B.: It's where you borrow money to buy a house, you pay interest on the money that you borrowed, and then you're able to write a percentage of that interest off on your taxes that you pay to state and local government. It is a subsidy from the government for the fact that you are purchasing housing. Rentals have nothing similar in place.

We've wiped out the subsidies for rental properties to poor people. What little is left is screened on moral grounds, and whether the government can afford it. On the economic stimulus side of things, there's no cap. It comes down to collecting money versus allocating money.

The bottom line is, if you owe me \$50 and I tell you to keep it, I just gave you \$50. From a simple math perspective, money not collected is the same as money spent. In a political realm, money not collected is a stimulus. The money's going to mortgage interest companies, to banks, to realtors, to construction companies. When the money's going to poor people, it's charity, it's welfare, and we have to limit it.

We do \$34 billion in affordable housing funding for poor people and we screen the hell out of who's eligible for it. We complain about it all the time, and we set up systems for oversight for review that would put the IRS to shame. We do \$144 billion in subsidy for homeowners and we call it "Economic Stimulus" and we put no cap on it whatsoever. The government didn't stop investing in housing. It stopped investing in housing that applied to poor people.

I.B.: *Talk to us about the history of the*

criminalization of the poor in the United States.

P.B.: In doing the research, we discovered about a 40-year pattern of laws tailored to local communities targeting the same group, going back to the 1860s, and with the alms houses in England, going back even before that.

In the 1860s, San Francisco created what they called, "ugly laws," and they swept the country. Basically, the laws say that maimed, diseased or mutilated panhandlers needed to be swept off the street.

Then you had the "Sundown Towns," the Japanese Exclusion Act, you had Jim Crow. There's this pattern of local governments seeing this social and/or economic issue they're freaking out about and saying, "I can't fix this, so I'm going to get rid of it."

If local communities can't address the underlying causes for a social program due to the lack of resources or political will they eventually begin to use their legal authority to create laws to try to solve the problem.

It's usually followed by well-crafted public relations campaigns targeted at the media to make the general population scared of homeless people.

What better way to sell newspapers than to dehumanize people? You use fear to instill in people a desire to make "it" go away. Everybody hates the boogeyman. You turn the squeegee guys in New York into the boogeyman, no one's going to complain when they disappear, or ask where they go, because they don't care where they went.

When we looked at movie trailers from the 1930s and 40s, it was exactly how they were justifying Anti-Okie Laws. American citizens traveling across the country in search of something better were often times portrayed as rapists or felons. The message was, "We need to protect ourselves by making these people from Oklahoma go away or not letting them into California."

If you look at the quality of life enforcement programs — they say people can't sit, or stand still or lie down. They say in certain circumstances you can't eat or sleep. Well then, if I don't have a home, what the fuck can I do? Walk.

The irony is, while we call these offenses "crimes," every human being has to engaged in these activities to simply survive.

We keep reinventing the wheels of public planning processes and federal priorities, thinking if we can just hit this one magic pill, then we'll fix it without looking at what we've created. I think it's a classic example of cause and effect and connecting the dots, and going back to, 'When did the housing crisis start; what happened right before it started; and let's see if that wasn't the primary cause of it.'

Budget Authority: \$17.6 billion (in 2004 constant dollars); 77 percent less than 1978 budget authority. Contemporary mass homelessness emerges nationwide.

- Emergency homeless shelters, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, open across the country.

- Local governments and police begin enforcing vagrancy laws and passing ordinances that target people experiencing homelessness.

- Congress passes the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, the first major federal legislation devoted solely to addressing homelessness.

- Rural homelessness is a growing crisis largely ignored.

1990s: USDA Section 515 program creates only 2,853 rural affordable housing units. The program created 30,175 units in 1976.

- HUD Low/Moderate-Income Housing Budget Authority: \$19.2 billion (in 2004 constant dollars); 75 percent less than 1978 budget. Funding for construction of new public housing units halted. More than 150,000 public housing units are lost over the next 14 years.

2000s:

- 2000: National Alliance to End Homelessness launches 10-Year Plans to

End Homelessness.

- 2003: USDA Section 515 program creates 783 rural affordable housing units.

- 2006: 37 million people live in poverty in the United States.

- 2007: Federal tax expenditures on home ownership: \$102.8 billion; HUD Low/Moderate-Income Housing Assistance Budget Authority: \$30.9 billion (in 2004 constant dollars).

- 2008: Recession sweeps across United States and world: homelessness spikes dramatically, especially among families, and tent cities reemerge across the country.

- 39.8 million people live in poverty in the United States.

- The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 establishes the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). The goal of NHTF is to build or preserve 1.5 million units of affordable housing over 10 years.

- 2009: Roughly 3.4 million families experience foreclosure — 60 percent of foreclosures are caused by unemployment.

- 2013: 48.5 million live in poverty in the United States. As many as 3.5 million people experience homelessness in the United States.

Figures compiled by the Western Regional