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the housing projects from the '70s, and you call for more public housing in your report. What would that look like, compared to what we remember from decades ago?

A.A.: To be more specific, what we call for is more investment in the public housing stock. We have slightly over a million households that live in public housing, funded through the public housing program. But the capital resources to maintain that housing has not been adequate for years. Our point is we need resources to maintain that housing because it provides stable housing to some of our most vulnerable families.

If you look at the average income of families that live in public housing, it's lower than the other programs. It's extremely low, and the same is true of the voucher program, as well. These programs serve the most financially vulnerable households. And in many cases, there's a backlog of maintenance. There's a backlog of needed capital investments in the housing stock that exists. And we have such a shortage of affordable housing that we can't lose it.

What extremely low-income renters can afford, even those who are working, because many of them *are* working, what they can afford to pay doesn't cover the costs of operating the building. If you need new housing, it doesn't cover the cost of developing the housing and then operating it. What's needed are subsidies of some form.

J.Z.: *Anything in compiling this report that gave you pause?*

A.A.: The fact that this shortage is not just a problem in a couple of housing markets, or even 100 housing markets. We tend often to talk about the high-cost markets, but the reality is this shortage is a problem *nationally*, in just about every county. In our report, we only document the shortage for each state and the 70 largest metropolitan areas. But if we were to expand that out to most jurisdictions of the country, the shortage would be everywhere. And I think that's an important point.

The other thing is if you look at 2007, the year when the recession happened, the shortage was about 6.8 million affordable and available homes. And today it's 7.2 million, so it's gotten worse. But the point of mentioning the 6.8 million is that this shortage, some of it can be attributed to recent happenings in the economy over the past 10 years, but the reality is this is long term. We need a solution. Even before the Great Recession, we had a problem. We have a lot of households that cannot afford the housing they live in. So that problem is going to remain with us until we're willing to invest what's needed into programs that solve that problem.

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Let Me Out!

by Mikey

Caged up in a cell but cut loose in hell
Railroad-spiked to a cross made of dross-loss.
Self-programmed careless coin toss
Fuck the odds if I win or lose! Right?
I just lose, throw away, misplace or get taken from me
Everything I place any temporary value on,
Every time and living on the street,
No one pays me to lug my load around anyhow
So fuck it off, trade it off, get loaded and nod it off,
So long as the snake sheds the skin in time
To not abcess or break its own back
It's all the same in the end.
But this is ultra-freedom, right?
No landlord, case manager, P.O. doctor, parental control
To do a dance for just me, my dope,
My few good veins and (rarely) enough money to play doctor
With myself any time it's doable.
The room without walls isn't my playground after all!
It's a rat's nest of tether bolted to a sequoia tree.
Tangled in a tackle box.
I'm not a prisoner – I'm a child
Not a criminal – a sinner, etc.,
I'm an imperfectionist
Cannot be squeezed into a mold or shaped like pottery!
Don't try, let me out! God's creating me, not you
Let that be my way of winning the lottery

Oh God, It's Another Day

by Wookie

How is the city going to try to knock me down
It can try, but I'm resilient
It's had 4+ years of me on these streets
But I am still here, I survive, I thrive
And I'll be here again tomorrow
So, Portland: Nice try!