Advocating Tenants' Rights

Continued from Front

that is a white tenant, and not experience the same kind of questioning or same kind of resistance," Community Alliance of Tenants Executive Director Katrina Holland told the Portland Observer.

The community advocates say the roots of these issues are deeply entrenched in both intentional and unintentional discriminatory practices. As contributors to the problem, they cite a broken criminal justice system and a housing industry that has often devalued diverse cultures and ways of life.

By adopting new policies that champion housing equity and increase fair housing choices, the city will get families off the streets, according to the aligned groups. The housing advocates want prohibitions against denying housing based on citizenship status, being screened out of consideration for a rental for not making an income 3 to 3.5 times the rent, and being denied housing due to criminal history when there's racial profiling and an over-representation of communities of color in the criminal justice system.

If a person is stable for six months to a year after being incarcerated, for example, they're not likely to go back to jail, data shows, but they do often routinely get denied housing, Holland said.

Astronomical initial housing fees in the form of security deposits, some of which are higher due to poor credit history, were also singled out. In addition, Holland said communities of color are also disproportionately impacted by predatory lending, leading in many cases to a poor credit score or bankruptcy and subsequent denial of housing.

Discriminatory assumptions about normal wear and tear of apartments, and subsequent denial of tenants' receiving their security deposits back, were also mentioned as major issues.

The organizations have been working with Portland City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's office to craft more equitable screening criteria and security deposit ordinances in Portland. They urge Mayor Wheeler and the other city councilors to support Eudaly in that process, and as soon as possible.

"Advancing strong local security deposit and screening criteria legislation will help combat these legal loopholes for extremely subjective and often, discriminatory private market practices allowed under current landlord-tenant law," the housing advocates claim.

The proposed reforms are part of an over-arching effort by the Community Alliance of Tenants to empower tenants through education, organizing, and advocacy. It's also part of an ongoing effort to pass laws advocating tenants' rights across the county and state.

Holland said the Community Alliance of Tenants operates under some assumptions that should be better reflected in the law, such that housing should be a human right, the relationship between landlords and tenants should be mutually beneficial, and tenants' should have the right to protect themselves without being penalized.

"If we really want to talk about getting people off the streets, we have to be comprehensive in our approach. So sure, we can build housing. Yes, we can talk about rent stabilization. Yes, we can preserve affordable housing. Yes, we can definitely talk about no cause evictions. We also need to talk about housing access, how people are going to get into these new units or get into these existing units. And right now that's a problem, we got to fix it," Holland said.

Many low-income people, including people of color, those with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, seniors, young adults, and parents find it difficult to find and afford a place to live. Some have had to forgo basic necessities like food and medicine, been forced to move away from their family members and neighbors to find housing, or have even become houseless.

In Gresham, a coalition of housing organizations and community members called Gresham Housing for the People has also been participating in an ongoing push for renters' rights and stable housing.

Holding rallies, testifying at Gresham City Council meetings and other actions have raised awareness in Gresham and east Multnomah County about needed tenant protections, some of which were adopted in Portland, such as a 90-day required notice for no-cause evictions and relocation assistance for tenants who receive a non-cause eviction or significant rent increase.

Back in March, Portland City Council made permanent a renter protection policy originally adopted two years earlier that requires landlords to pay relocation costs ranging from $2,900 to $4,500 to tenants who received a no-cause eviction or received a rent increase of more than 10 percent in one year.

African American Alliance for Homeownership

Presents the 20th Annual

Homeownership Fair

"A Salute to AAAH Homebuyers"

Saturday, October 27, 2018

10am - 3pm

Legacy Emanuel Hospital Atrium
501 N. Graham St., Portland 97227

Special Performance by Nafisaria

"Homes For Sale" Bus Tour 12noon FIRST COME FIRST SERVED

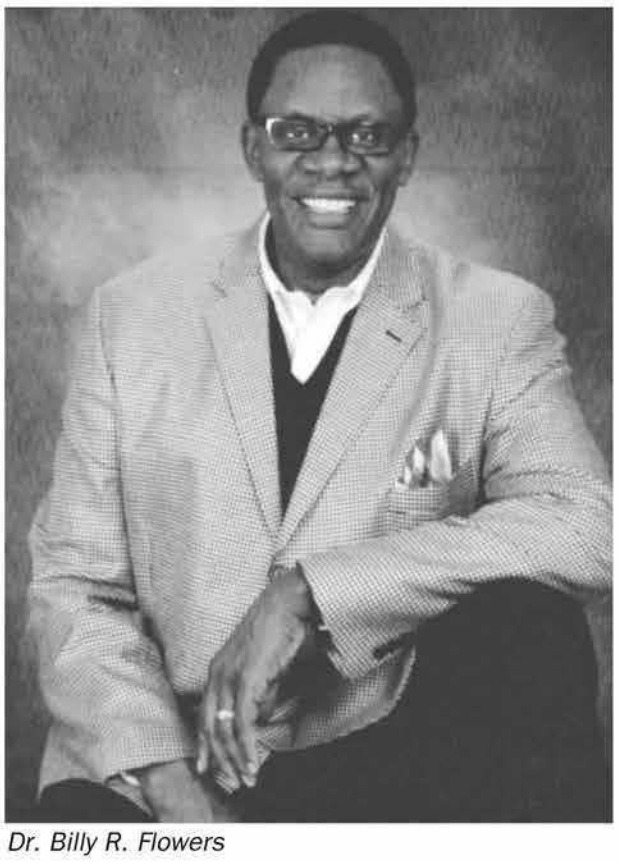
- Learn About First-Time Homebuyer Resources
- Visit Over 40 Home buying Experts
- Free Workshops/Home Retention Services
- Enter the Down Payment Assistance Drawing
- Free Lunch • Free Parking • Prizes

FREE & OPEN to the Public

AAAH HomeStreet Bank FAIRWAY Portland Housing Bureau UMPQUA BANK WELLS FARGO HOME MORTGAGE LEGACY HEALTH usbank

www.aaah.org • 503-595-3517

Pre-registration NOT Required



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 4. Stress: How Chiropractic can help ease life's day-to-day pressures.

Q: I hear a lot about stress these days. Just how serious is it?

A: Stress causes high blood pres sure, which in turn is a major cause of strokes and heart disease. It can lead to asthma, arthritis, insomnia and migraines. It impairs the immune system and is estimated to cost the nation over $100 billion each year in lost productivity, absenteeism and health care costs. That's pretty serious.

Q: I have a very stressfull job. How can Chiropractic help me?

A: Modern Chiropractic care can help de-stress your body. By helping your nervous system work more smoothly, Chiropractic helps assure that all your body funcions (including the ones negatively affected by stress) are working properly. What's more, today's Chiropractors can also help you with natural relaxation technigues such as yoga, message and visualization. For less stress, or more answers to any questions you might have about your health, you'll find that Chiropractic is often the answer. Call us for an appointment today.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office
2124 NE Hancock, Portland Oregon 97212
Phone: (503) 287-5504