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"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."

-Angela Y. Davis

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#### **Congress Heights Residents Plan March Against Slumlord**

**By Yasmina Mrabet, ONE DC Housing & People's Platform Organizer**

Two days after Christmas, on December 27, 2017, real estate developer and slumlord Geoff Griffis cut a back door deal with long-time partner and fellow slumlord Sanford Capital in an attempt to acquire their properties at Congress Heights, via an irregular and possibly illegal land transfer. This attempted transfer is a desperate and last minute move by Griffis to circumvent two Court orders that would have otherwise resulted in either a negotiated agreement with Congress Heights tenants to prevent displacement and jump start the building of 200 units of affordable housing, or, a \$2 million payment to the court to be used to repair the property as part of the ongoing receivership action.

This shameless attempted transfer of property from Sanford Capital to Geoff Griffis also took place during a 60-day period within which the court ordered Sanford Capital to negotiate exclusively with Congress Heights tenants via their chosen non-profit developer, NHT (National Housing Trust). **In response to this latest maneuver by Geoff Griffis, Attorney General Karl Racine filed a [contempt motion](#) against Griffis in an effort to expose the underhanded nature of this latest displacement tactic.**

To be clear: Griffis's intent is to stop money from being paid to the court by Sanford Capital (his partner), thus preventing desperately needed repairs that would protect the health and well-being of Congress Heights tenants.

**Moreover, the move is designed to prevent tenants from being able to exercise their rights under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), thus depriving them the opportunity to take control of the redevelopment process for themselves.**

This usurping of tenant rights in the midst of an affordable housing crisis prevents tenants from doing exactly what TOPA was designed for, namely, giving the tenants a legal tool to prevent their own displacement, and also, to preserve and expand affordable housing in their own community.

Geoff Griffis is willing to subject Congress Heights tenants to continued unsafe, unhealthy conditions in order to push forward a luxury development plan at the expense of community interests. **However, Congress Heights tenants are in the midst of fighting back.** Their legal team, including Arnold & Porter and the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, is actively working to dispute Griffis's attempts to circumvent TOPA and the receivership.

[Justice First](#) and [ONE DC](#) are gearing up for mass mobilization in support of affordable housing and against displacement at Congress Heights. Tenants have worked for four years in order to control the land in their community. This is a line in the sand and a battle that cannot be lost. Join us at noon on [Saturday, February 10](#) as we march on the home of slumlord Geoff Griffis!



## **MARCH AGAINST SLUMLORD**

### **GEOFF GRIFFIS**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH  
MEET AT 12 NOON  
CLEVELAND PARK METRO STATION  
3599 CONNECTICUT AVE NW**

RSVP: [onedconline.org/stopslumlords](http://onedconline.org/stopslumlords)

**#StandWithCongressHeights**

[Click here to RSVP](#)

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**Black Workers & Wellness Center Capital Fundraising Campaign Enters Phase II**



With the Black Workers & Wellness Center Building purchased, ONE DC is now in the process of retaining a property management company to help with routine management of the property. We also will embark on a planning process for upgrade and renovation of the building. The pace of renovation will depend on [ongoing fundraising](#), but in February an architect will be hired to start the planning work and receive direction from ONE DC members. [Click here to donate!](#)

OUR GOAL

# \$3 MILLION

On December 22, 2017, ONE DC purchased the building at 2500 Martin Luther King Ave SE! Now we're raising funds to renovate & create a state-of-the-art community-controlled space.

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PHASE 1: BUILDING PURCHASE  
\$1.25 million by December 2017  
**COMPLETED**

**PHASE 2: INITIAL RENOVATION**  
\$250,000 by March 2018

**3. STATE-OF-THE-ART UPGRADES**  
\$660,000 by January 2019

**4. LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**  
\$840,000 by December 2020



The Resource Committee is looking for long-time DC residents to join our committee in 2018. Come be a part of a team that is making sure the work of ONE DC and a more equitable DC is possible! Time commitments vary from 4-10 hours a month. No previous training or experience is necessary. If interested, please reply to this email or contact Dominic at [dmoulden@onedconline.org](mailto:dmoulden@onedconline.org) or Nawal at [nrajeh@onedconline.org](mailto:nrajeh@onedconline.org)

## **Save the Date - ONE DC Annual Membership Meeting**

What is the people's vision for 2018 and beyond? What is ONE DC's financial standing? How did we win in 2017? How can you as a member get involved? Join us to find out at our Annual Membership Meeting on [Saturday, March 24th](#).

### ***Special Elections 2018!***

There is an open seat on the ONE DC Shared Leadership Team (SLT). At the Annual Membership Meeting, eligible candidates will be nominated or self-nominated from the floor. We will then hold a vote by secret ballot. All are welcome to attend the Annual Meeting, but only members who are up to date on their [annual dues](#) will be eligible to vote. Below are the qualifications for being elected as a member to the Shared Leadership Team:

- (1) Be a resident of the District of Columbia,
- (2) Be at least 18 years of age,
- (2) Be a ONE member for at least 6 months and current in the payment of membership dues,
- (3) Complete ONE leadership and capacity training, and
- (4) Demonstrate commitment to ONE's values, work and mission as demonstrated through an interview process with the Leadership Committee.

**There are also open seats on the Shared Leadership Team that can be appointed. We encourage anyone interested to contact SLT member Nicole Newman at [nicole.a.newmn@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.a.newmn@gmail.com) or call 202.232.2915 to learn more about the roles & responsibilities.**

[Click here to RSVP](#)

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### **Making the Just City**

**By Raheem Anthon**

In December 2017, the Making The Just City team based in DC made a trip to conduct a learning exchange with the team in Orange, NJ. The meeting started off reaching agreement on the type of analysis we will use for the project in the following year. Situation analysis, put forward for discussion by Dr. Mindy Fullilove, examines complex interpersonal episodes in their embedding context in order to: 1) name the situation and 2) discern a set of strategies for action. The team decided this was a good way to delineate the episodes taking place in both cities.

The Making The Just City project started in early spring of 2017. The acting team members in DC, Serita El Amin and Raheem Anthon, were selected by IRL (Interdisciplinary Research Leadership) members Dominic Moulden and Derek Hyra, with input from the ONE DC Shared Leadership Team. The Making Just City project also has a New Jersey team: members Dr. Mindy Fullilove, Molly Fullilove, and Audrey Murdock.



Gentrification across different cities shares many similarities such as displacement, rent increases, extreme poverty, and many more crippling effects. Yet, within each city that faces gentrification, there are unique episodes. Examining these unique experiences provides an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the effects. Since Orange is in the beginning stages of gentrification and DC in a late stage, applying situation analysis will give the team the ability to examine both areas and compare them to come up with solutions.

Developers have continued a type of “Jim Crow era” housing policies whereby poor Brown and Black folks are kicked out, replaced by an increasingly white population largely removed from the existing community. The DC team discussed this before arriving in Orange, referencing scenes from Baltimore. When looking at Baltimore, it becomes clear how displacement is not just made up of bad policy decisions, but is an attack on the Black and Brown (and even poor white) communities that have been occupying these spaces for years.

After the discussions, the Orange team guided the DC team through the Valley District. The area is working class (majority Black and Brown residents) with many industrial buildings vacant, which was the same situation in DC before gentrification. The team also learned some history of local organizing, such as [Ironworks](#); a youth-led organization that focuses on culture, art, and community. After leaving the Valley, the team made a trip to the inner city of Orange, stopping at a local bakery whose owners expressed their dedication to staying connected to the changing community.

Once the tour was over, the team gathered for a community concert that celebrated the day Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white customer during the Jim Crow era, sparking protest that eventually evolved into the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The concert had many musical performances, from Oakwood Avenue Community School singing “Vivir Mi Vida” by Marc Anthony, to a solo performance by cellist Terrence Thornhill performing “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” dedicated to his recently deceased grandmother.

On the final day of the trip, the MTJC team summed up how we want to apply “situation analysis” within our area of study. We drafted a chart of who were the key players within the communities (residents, politicians, developers, and business owners) to delineate a conceived observation of each area. In the coming year, MTJC will be working on a plan on when to conduct the interviews, meetings, and one-on-ones. The team is looking forward to making sure that this project will be a cornerstone of research dealing with community health as related to gentrification and displacement.

[Click here to learn more about the Making the Just City project](#)

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### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Beyond the Capitalist Enterprise - The Movement for Worker Coops**

**Wednesday, January 31 - 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**

St. Stephen Church - 1525 Newton St NW

*Hosted by Democracy at Work*

Criticizing capitalism can be easy, especially after the 2008 Financial Crisis, but what many of us are looking for is the solution, the fix, and a way forward. Join Prof. Richard D. Wolff, Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and author of many books including "Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism", to discuss how worker co-ops are a viable alternative to building a new and better economy for the future.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

#### **Eyewitness Cuba -- The Revolution Continues!**

**Saturday, February 3 - 3:00 to 5:00 PM**

Watha T. Daniel Library - 1630 7th St NW

*Hosted by the Party for Socialism and Liberation*

2016 Presidential candidate Gloria La Riva joins us in D.C. to report back after being invited to Cuba with a PSL delegation for a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. The brigade was formed to stand in solidarity with the Revolution, by Cuban youth living abroad because their parents had left the island. Hear eyewitness reports and see video and images from the delegation's trip, as well as an update on the Cuban economy, the remarkable hurricane recovery, recent biotechnology innovations and the need to end the U.S. blockade. A group discussion will follow the presentation.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

#### **DC Jobs With Justice Community Meeting**

**Wednesday, February 7 - 5:30 PM**

St Stephens Church - 1525 Newton St NW,

Join the JWW community to learn about our 2018 campaigns and what you can do to fight for justice in Washington, DC.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

#### **DC Grassroots Planning Coalition Meeting**

**Saturday, February 10 - 2:00 to 4:00 PM**

Southwest Neighborhood Library - 900 Wesley PI SW

Trump is cutting Fed programs and funds that help DC's working families -- like housing, food stamps, and other social uplift programs. This slashing of Federal

funding elevates how Mayor Bowser and the DC City Council spend local money and utilize local public assets. In recent years we've seen tax gifts and public land given to developers to build luxury condos, hotels and stadiums all decided in a top-down way. But our local money and assets requires grassroots planning and that is where our local communities and Wards come in. Self-determination of our neighborhoods own futures is imperative no matter who is in office! We want to invite all of the people we work with on these zoning and planning issues into the room. We want to continue to build the Ward-level and neighborhood level teams we will need in 2018 to win key policies we want in the Comprehensive Plan to help shape the future of our communities.

[Click here for more info](#)

**Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital  
Thursday, February 15 - 6:00 PM**

UDC Student Center Ballroom - 4200 Connecticut Avenue NW

Authors, Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove will discuss the tumultuous, four-century story of race and democracy in our nation's capital.

Book signing and cupcake reception to follow the presentation.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

**2018 Transit Rider Organizing Bootcamp**

**March 8 & 9, 2018**

Tommy Douglas Conference Center - 10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD

*Hosted by Americans for Transit*

An action packed 1.5 days of speakers, panels, and workshops. Connect with community and labor partners. Learn from transit rider organizers on the ground working to improve service, increase funding, and hold decision makers accountable to the riding public.

[Click here to register](#)

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**WMATA Continues Crackdown with Anti-rider Fare Initiative**

By [Save Our System Coalition](#)

Amid an ongoing funding crisis - which in a recent [report by Ray LaHood](#), stated the system needs at least \$500 million additionally a year to sustain - WMATA has decided to end their negative balance program in an effort to regain "lost revenue." WMATA has lost \$25 million over a period of 17 years.

Previously, if you were taken metro bus and you had less than \$2 on your smarttrip, the system would let you on and you could pay the next time you are at a metro station. On January 8th, WMATA will do away with this policy and riders with low or negative balances will have to add additional fare to their SmartTrip cards at fare boxes on the bus or exit fare machines on the metro. Because these methods of adding fare are cash and coin only, bus and station operators will be forced to provide additional assistance to riders during busy times such as rush hour. ultimately this will increase disputes over fares, which WMATA has claimed its working to reduce in its ongoing campaign to criminalize low income people - namely black and brown communities - who cannot afford high fares.

Ultimately this will increase disputes over fares, [which WMATA has claimed its working to reduce](#) in its ongoing campaign to criminalize low income people - namely black and brown communities - who cannot afford high fares.

It's true - Metro needs funding. But securing this funding thru high fares, service cuts and other anti-rider initiatives that inevitably results in the criminalizing low income communities and targeting those who are already struggle to pay metro fares is the wrong way to achieve this.

These policies only serve to make Metro more inaccessible to those who need access to public transportation most. Undermining access to public transportation will only worsen the racial and economic divides that plague our city all the while distracting the public from the real fare evaders looting the system.

[Click here to continue reading on SaveMetro.org](#)

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### **Community Learning Walking Tours Continue in 2018**



"Thank you so much for such a powerful learning experience in visiting ONE DC as part of our trip. We are back in San Francisco, and thinking about all the connections to the issues impacting DC natives and people of color just as we are wrestling with our own affordability and displacement crisis. We greatly appreciate your support for our students to have a localized DC learning experience, and for the great organizing resources by ONE DC which we hope they'll continue to think over this semester as we further explore community organizing and activism. I am sending along a pic from our visit, and please let us know if you are ever in SF!" -*Esther Madriz Living Learning Community at University of San Francisco*

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**ONE Bit of Good News**



ONE DC Shared Leadership Team member and native Washingtonian Dewayne Brown (pictured above, third from left) was shot in October and seriously wounded. His miraculous recovery was celebrated when he visited ONE DC with his family.

Do you want to be a writer, editor, or designer for the ONE DC *Monthly Voice*? Email [organizer@onedconline.org](mailto:organizer@onedconline.org)

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to the  
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