



"In a system that prioritizes profit over people, I'm not Beth. I'm a dollar sign walking down the street."

-Beth Myers-Edward, Baltimore native & lifetime renter (from [Shelterforce](#))

Over 100,000 Voices Demand Congress to Reject Cruel Rent Hikes



Tenants and organizers outside the U.S. Capitol

This morning at 11:00 AM, representatives from ONE DC, [Bread for the City](#), and the Poor People's Campaign [delivered a petition with over 100,000 signatures](#) to House Financial Service Committee Chair Jeb Hensarling to demand the protection of housing rights for low-income renters across the United States.

After cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthiest people and in the middle of an historic national housing crisis, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson and President Donald Trump have asked Congress to

pass legislation to raise rents for all residents of public and subsidized housing and triple rents for the lowest-income residents.

This cruel proposal has sparked outrage from people across the country and in the District, where the proposal would mean a rent hike of \$900 per year for the poorest families, and would put seniors and families with young children to risk of homelessness in the nation's capital.

Local and national groups including Right to the City, an organization of which ONE DC is an organizational member, have collected over 100,000 signatures from people demanding Congress refuse to pass any proposal to raise rents and instead make the investments necessary in HUD to provide housing assistance to everyone.



Keisha, Janice, & Angie - Members of the Shaw Housing Education Team

"The housing crisis has reached emergency levels. More than half of all Americans spend over 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, including me and my family," said Paulette Matthews, a resident at Barry Farm Public Housing. "Now Ben Carson and Trump want Congress to help them make it worse. I'm proud to stand with people all over the country in telling Congress to remember who they work for and reject this cruel proposal."

The petition delivered was sponsored by Americans for Tax Fairness, CarsonWatch, Center for American Progress Action Fund, CPD Action, Daily Kos, MHAction, Partnership for Working Families, People's Action, Progress America, and Right to the City Alliance. [Click here to add your name to the petition.](#)



People's Platform organizer Kelly holding the 100,000 signatures demanding a stop to rising costs for low-income renters

Shaken, Not Deterred

By Jourgette Reid-Sillah, Richman Apartments

Almost eight years ago, my family moved to Richman Apartments in Southeast D.C. At the time there was an empty lot across the street where I was told town homes and apartments were going to be built. Keeping in mind as to things that were happening in other parts of the city, I thought having an organized tenants association may be a good idea for Richman Apartments.



The lot is no longer empty. We have town homes and apartments directly across from our forty-one affordable units. New homeowners are settling in. These town homes were sold before they were built. Young families from various backgrounds have introduced themselves and state, "I love my neighborhood."

Our apartments are well-managed and we have no problems of a major scale that I'm aware with our management company, WC Smith. Our association would be a community building group. Everyone says they think it would be a good idea. The challenge is changing hearts and minds and getting people to step up and understand we have nothing to fear.

I, with the help of ONE DC, (thank you Kelly) have started organizing to get the tenants to elect a board to officially establish our tenant association.

Unfortunately, we didn't have a quorum to vote at our last meeting. Meanwhile, another town home is built. And another new neighbor moves into their home.

Congress Heights is changing rapidly. Starting with the St. Elizabeth's Project to the restoration of many historic homes along Alabama Ave. Change is here, Richman Apartments. Will You Be Ready?

Why D.C. Government Favors Luxury Condos Over Affordable Housing in Congress Heights

By Justice First



On Wednesday, June 27th at 10:00AM, Congress Heights tenants and their lawyers will be back in court demanding an end to slum conditions, deceitful deals, gentrification and displacement. Join Justice First and the Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenant Coalition in packing the courtroom! Address: 500 Indiana Ave NW, #518 [Click here to RSVP](#)

A major falsehood is being perpetrated by public and private sector supporters of the redevelopment project at Congress Heights: that the reason the District government refuses to use its powers to help a non-profit developer build 200 units of affordable housing there has nothing to do with the direct ties District government leaders have to a development group that wants to build luxury condos and offices in the same space. This lie is pushed despite the clear, deep political, financial, and personal relationships that facilitate exactly this sort of cozy relationship between public and private actors.

The actions of the District reflect that though since the beginning of the development process, the government has claimed it has little to no power to act, it has in fact helped facilitate the private business deal. A combination of continuing old practices and specific contemporary action have directly led to the current impasse, in which a massive affordable housing development is being held up by luxury condo investors.

The District's actions to facilitate displacement and gentrification at the site start at the very beginning. The Office of Planning (often referred to as "OP") has to certify that a project meets certain requirements to be presented to the Zoning Commission (often referred to as the "ZC") for approval. Justice First has argued for years that the process by which the OP proceeds is highly problematic. Frequently, including in this case, it is very clear from the start that developers actually do not meet the requirements. In fact, most applications presented to the ZC take the approach of seeing what requirements they can get away with ignoring without getting caught. Often, the requirements that 'fall through the cracks,' as we'd be led to believe, have to do with providing affordable housing options.

In this particular case, often repeated around the District, it was very clear the development team's proposal did not meet the statutory requirements for affordable housing – something the commission acknowledged right away when Justice First pointed it out at a ZC hearing. This reveals a larger issue: Why does OP not use its authority more broadly? The OP seems to take the position that if a proposal comes within the ballpark of these rules, the ZC can figure out the rest. This means, among other things, that many projects move forward with far less affordable housing than they are supposed to facilitate. The zoning experts on the OP and ZC know what the regulations are, but leave it to community members to point out shortfalls.

So just the process of getting to the ZC is weighted heavily toward developers and facilitates their attempts to do end runs around the actual zoning rules. **This is a longtime process at OP and one that makes the Bowser administration, by allowing it to continue, complicit in this structural aspect of gentrification.**

Next is the Zoning Commission itself. After a 2014 court case in which the D.C. Court of Appeals took the ZC to task, Washington Business Journal noted "The Zoning Commission has never rejected a PUD application before, and it does have a tendency to adopt applicants' draft orders nearly word-for-word." The court's own words in that case directly pertain to a central issue in the Congress Heights dispute: "Although we have not independently verified the precise calculation, we have no reason to doubt the ... claim, which the developer does not dispute, that the commission's order is an approximately 99.9% verbatim adoption of the developer's proposed order...The commission even adopted almost all of the grammatical and typographical errors in the developer's proposed order."

The mayor, of course, appoints the majority of ZC members. If the ZC is pliable and amenable to the needs of developers to the extent that it is actually ridiculed for it in court, it seems fairly clear that the mayors who appoint ZC members must share a great deal of the blame. This is another example of legacy practices making the D.C. government complicit in displacement and gentrification.

More germane to this project has been the saga of 3200 13th St. SE. The building, which sits empty, sits on the same footprint as the other properties even though it is independently owned by the District. The first ask of tenants was that the District government, which has significant legal leverage due to

unpaid loans, take control of the property and use their public ownership to help the tenants leverage non-profit developers to create significant affordable housing.

The District, despite admitting its ability to do so in a D.C. Council hearing, refused to do so. Then, after Congress Heights tenants were able to find a non-profit developer and set the stage for a large affordable housing development, tenants and their allies resurrected this demand.

Not only was the District unresponsive; it then secretly took control of the building. Once that move was brought into the open it seemed like the way was clear for tenants to not only exercise their rights to purchase their own buildings, but, with a little help from the District, for the way to be paved for 200 units of affordable housing.

In a public meeting with tenant leaders and Ward 8 Councilmember Trayon White, the director of the District of Columbia Housing and Community Development Agency (DHCD) made it clear that while they have the power to work to promote the broader affordable housing proposal, that they preferred to place the property on the open market for anyone (read: Geoff Griffis & friends) to buy.

The District has the opportunity in this building to create a rare 100 percent affordable housing development - but through inertia; a government structured to facilitate displacement, slums and gentrification; and outright unwillingness to work with anyone other than a luxury condo development group, the District is instead blocking the way.

The real question is whether a web of business people and politicians so intimately connected and dependent upon each other can credibly be seen as not trading on those relationships to obtain the outcome they desire, at the expense of all other possibilities.

[Click here to read the full Justice First report](#) and [click here to RSVP](#) to pack the courtroom for Congress Heights this Wednesday at 10:00 AM.

We Demand Community Control Over Our Land!

All across the city, the DC government is turning our public land, properties, and resources over to capitalist developers. Take action this week to demand valuable public resources be used to meet our basic needs as people, rather than for profit!

Crummell for Community, Not Condos!

Wednesday, June 27 at 10:00 AM (same hearing as Parcel 42 below)

1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Room 123

For over 40 years, Ivy City has fought for Crummell to be restored for public use. Join Empower DC & Friends of Crummell School at DC Council to demand a recreational center, park, & play space -- not condos -- at Crummell School.

[Click here to RSVP & for more info](#)

Parcel 42 - Stop DC government from subsidizing luxury apartments!

Wednesday, June 27 at 10:00 AM (same hearing as Crummell School above)

1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Room 123

Parcel 42 is a prominent parcel of publicly owned land. ONE DC has organized for the past 10 years to have P42 developed into low-income housing. Its redevelopment should benefit the longtime residents of Shaw and those most at risk of losing their housing. We demand:

- 1) 100% of units low cost at 0% to 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) in Shaw
- 2) \$7.8 million or more set aside to ensure affordability
- 3) Parcel 42 is a demonstrated site for homelessness prevention
- 4) 100% of units are permanently low cost for 100 years

For more info, email ONE DC at organizer@onedconline.org or call 202-232-2915.

Save McMillan Park!

Wednesday, June 27 at 6:00 PM

Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Library - 1630 7th St NW

Join with other Save McMillan Park supporters to appeal the recent terrible planning decisions made by the city that may, if we don't fight, result in the privatization and demolition of our McMillan Park, located at 1st and North Capitol Streets, NW. Gather this Wednesday to sign appeal petitions and discuss our legal tactics.

For more info and to RSVP: Save McMillan Action Coalition & DC for Reasonable Development, Contact: Chris, 202.810.2768, smac.dc@gmail.com

Injustice at Wayne Place SE

By Rasheed Van Putten

It was late October 2017 when the former owner of my building told me that he wanted to sell the building. I immediately expressed interest, and requested that he send the proper paperwork, an Offer of Sale, [as required by the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act \(TOPA\)](#). Verbally the building owner would agree to send this document, but in deed his true intentions were clear.

The building owner's failure to provide an opportunity for the tenants to purchase the building was apparent and highlighted on February 17, 2018 when he appeared at my doorstep unannounced with a waiver that he wanted me to sign immediately. Of course I refused and took the waiver to ONE DC and Office of the Tenant Advocate. I was advised during free counsels by both organizations not to sign the waiver. After some discussion, both organizations were able to clearly identify that the TOPA process was not yet in motion.



113 Wayne Place SE

We soon found out that the building went up for sale in October 2017. **An illegal sale of the building had occurred.** I was advised to file a formal complaint with the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD). After confirming OHCD's mailing address and email address, I used certified mail and email to file my complaint. I received an auto-reply stating someone would follow up with me within 24 hours.

After three days I decided to visit OHCD in-person. I was told that neither of my complaints were received even though we agreed that I had the proper mailing information. The OHCD employee that I spoke to agreed that my TOPA rights were violated, but tried to convince me that the sale of the building was not illegal. She advised me against forming a tenant association and assured me that it was best to file a lawsuit to receive compensation.

Collaboration between local government and housing developers is no secret to most concerned citizens and has even [been reported on by news media](#). This is a conspiracy against the working class Black people in DC, especially those in poverty.

[We, the tenants, need ownership of the building at 113 Wayne Place SE to protect ourselves](#) by assuming our God-given right to exercise self-determination. To control of our own affairs is the only way we will build a stronger community. Please support this effort to be an example of economic democracy.

Housing is a human right, so please heed this call for community control over housing and land in Washington, DC and other gentrifying cities!

Juneteenth: Very Extremely Mine & Here to Stay

By Angie Whitehurst

A poem presented at Juneteenth Festival, Saturday, June 16, 2018

Extreme unbelievably Justify that!
Give it to me;
Juneteenth! Whatttt!

One day of unfreed freedom.
The physical chains that screamed to be undone.
The chains of psycho trauma, a mindset of fear and nowhere to run!
And yes, we did,
the freedom fighters stealth and bravery through Tubman's underground
railroad and solo flights through rivers, creeks, on foot secreting in the dark of
any time of moonrise white, under cover of sunset waiting to be invisibly black.

:Extreme:

to fight a war based on old king cotton and, who deserved the biggest share.
The big fat rosy white lipped lie,
One of the longest tallest tales ever told.
It was greed and cheap labor without a cash payroll.

Extreme:

to have the chains dropped to face the era of reconstruction dumped in honor of
a gentle man's quarrel settled as if no harm to humanity was done a'tall.
A civil war not at all. Just a domestic dispute between two sides ; Brother North
and Brother South, how wastefully shallow!
The old white crow covered itself in pitch dark ashes.
He and the ole Jim Crow , used the laws of economics and cheap labor. They
came out on top and won.
And then, the innovations of the mind, a more perfect substitute nee technology.

Extreme, now we been freed... of chains, but not servitude and the struggle
trickles on!

Extreme

To celebrate a day off still enslaved

Extreme, we have to remember and observe those days!
Extreme! I think not... we cannot let it go until we are truly free and get it right!
Extreme, I love you for you give me the gumption to stand up and fight!
Jump up and down y'all
It's Juneteenth
Don't you hear the old black peoples call
"To steal away and be free?"
It makes sense to me!
extreme is not to grab the freedom and not be free.
Now ain't that extreme!

Upcoming Events

Public Meeting: Public Bank for the District Wednesday, June 27 - 6:00 PM

George Washington University Marvin Center - 800 21st St NW, Room 310
The District government hired a consultant several months ago to study what a
Public Bank of Washington, DC could look like -- but the Bowser administration
has done almost nothing to publicize it to the folks who could benefit from a
public bank the most. Let's invest in our community through a Public Bank,
instead of Wells Fargo. D.C. currently does its banking with Wells Fargo, which

has been hit with record fines for consumer fraud, racially discriminatory mortgage lending, and racially discriminatory hiring practices. The District's bank of record invests heavily in the payday lending industry, for-profit prisons and immigration detention centers, and pipelines like Keystone XL, Dakota Access, and the Potomac Pipeline, which threatens DC's drinking water. The consultant conducting the feasibility study for a Public Bank for DC is required to seek input from community organizations, and it matters who's in the room -- Please join us for the next public meeting on Wednesday, June 27!

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Family Separation Protest at the White House

Saturday, June 30 - 11:00 AM

Lafayette Square

On June 30, we're going to the White House to tell Donald Trump and his administration to stop separating kids from their parents! Families belong together, and we need to end this -- now. Every day, this administration is cruelly separating children from their families. They have proven that whether it's at the border or in detention, we can't trust them to care for children.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Politics & Pizza Happy Hour

Saturday, June 30 - 4:00 to 6:00 PM

Justice Center - 617 Florida Ave NW

Hosted by the Party for Socialism & Liberation

Immediately after the June 30 Rally for Immigrant Families, join the PSL for a happy hour to discuss the fight for immigrant rights and LGBTQ liberation. Overwhelming opposition to immigrant family separation, and the positive response to political contingents in LGBTQ Pride events around the country, are showing the people's resistance to Trump's ongoing campaigns of anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQ bigotry, racism and sexism. The Trump administration is attacking LGBTQ people and immigrants, rolling back protections that have been won in decades of struggle. How can we fight for an equitable, socialist society in the United States and around the world? Come discuss these issues and others at this special Pride month "Politics and Pizza" happy hour following the #FamiliesBelongTogether Rally for Immigrant Families.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

The Ask Rayceen Show, July 11: #AskRayceen Squares

Wednesday, July 11 - 6:00 to 9:30 PM

HRC - 1640 Rhode Island Ave NW

Hosted by The Ask Rayceen Show

Game Show Event: #AskRayceen Squares featuring special celebrity guests. (Local nonprofit groups compete for a cash prize). Listening Lounge: Live music by Nia Simmons. Burlesque by Uma Hurtman. Guest DJ for the evening: DJ MIM. Announcer: Anthony Oakes. Host: Rayceen Pendarvis. There will also be interviews with special guests, Shameless Plugs, vendors, exhibitors, and more. Free catered food, sponsored by AHF Pharmacy, is available for early arrivals, while supplies last.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Recovery Cafe

Saturday, July 14 - 7:00 to 10:00 PM

The Potter's House - 1658 Columbia Rd NW

Join us for the Recovery Café Open Mic! All DMV recovery communities, musicians, artists, supporters, families, friends are invited! This event is open to all. In partnership with The Potter's House of Washington, DC, Recovery Café has a vibrant and much loved history. Let's reignite the hope that anyone going through recovery of any type, has a place to come and express themselves as they find their way. You will be supported at this open mic.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Working for Transformation without Recreating the Past: An Intensive for Change Agents

Sunday, July 15 - 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Sponsored by Capital NVC in Winchester, VA

Are you committed to working for change and longing for an inspiring vision for the world?

Have you often wondered why so many social change organizations are full of conflict?

Do you wish to grow your capacity to connect with people across differences?

Are you drawn to combining love, courage, and truth in your work for change?

[Click here to register](#)

Confront Corruption at the White House

Wednesday, July 18 - 8:00 PM

Lafayette Park - Pennsylvania Ave NW & 16th Street Northwest

Vigil at the White House to confront corruption and demand democracy. Bring candles, signs, and your friends. We will be joined by a host of speakers working to hold the Trump administration accountable and create a democracy that works for everyone. Once the sun goes down there will also be a candlelit vigil photo op that will be shared widely as part of a national media push.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

The Youth Climate March

Saturday, July 21 - 10:30 AM

National Mall (monuments) - 1964 Independence Ave SW

Hosted by Zero Hour



We're gearing up for the youth march in July! Join us as we build on this movement, share our stories and advocate for a better future with sustainable solutions to our lawmakers. Now is not the time to back down. [Click here](#) for the July 19th Lobby Day.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

ONE DC in the Media

["Another Independence Day": What Juneteenth Means To Washingtonians](#)

The Kojo Nnamdi Show

[Juneteenth Festival in Southeast draws crowd of 500 people](#)

by Darla Dunning, *The Washington Times*

ONE Bit of Good News - Black Workers Center Chorus Members Awarded John Handcox Scholarship to Attend the Great Labor Arts Exchange

ONE DC Black Workers Center Chorus members Agyeiwaah Anan, Nana Malaya, Al McCray, Veronica Proctor, and Angie Whitehurst were awarded the John Handcox scholarship to attend the Great Labor Arts Exchange June 21-23, 2018 at the Tommy Douglas Center in Silver Spring, MD. The Great Labor Arts Exchange is a national conference of activist musicians and singers who use their art to support labor and community campaigns.



In the early days of the conference, John Handcox and Pete Seeger attended and shared their music and stories. [John Handcox](#), for whom the scholarship is named, "was a Great Depression-era tenant farmer and union advocate from Arkansas renowned for his politically charged songs and poetry. Handcox is noted for playing a "vital role in bettering the lives of sharecroppers and energizing labor union organizers and members." Despite his brief career, many of his songs were so popular that they became standard folk songs themselves, and continue to be sung today."

The Black Workers Center Chorus also performed their songs at the culminating march and rally of the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, DC on Saturday, June 23.

[You can find past editions of the Monthly Voice here.](#)

Do you want to be a writer, editor, or designer for the ONE DC *Monthly Voice*?

Email organizer@onedconline.org

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