

# BEYOND THE HEADLINES

OUR RENTS ARE UNAFFORDABLE AND BEING HOMELESS IS NOW A CRIME!

## TRAILER HOMES ARE UNDER ATTACK

If you find yourself in Little River driving down 82nd street, you've probably seen the Miami Soar Mobile Homes, one of the few places left in Miami where the poor can afford to rent or own a home. This trailer park is now at risk of being destroyed in order to build a mixed-use high rise building shooting [50 stories](#) into the sky. The property owners of Miami Soar Management Corp have requested the City of Miami approval to turn the 22-acre trailer park into a "special district" with its own zoning, aiming to spur more development in the area. The twin halves of the mobile park have provided housing opportunities for low-income families and other residents since 1950; one of the few trailer parks left in the Miami metro area. The families of Miami Soar Mobile Homes will suffer the same fate as past residents of [Little Farm Trailer Park](#) in El Portal or other countless homes that have stood in the way of developers' profit-driven vision. Tenants are stuck; either leave behind the trailer they own/rent or wait for the Miami Soar owners to kick them out once they get approval to build from the courts. Families will be driven out of the city; some may even end up homeless. This is just one example of gentrification rising in Miami, poor people being pushed out of the city they have known and loved.

Gentrification is a process of extracting profit from spaces previously neglected by certain kinds of capital, and it happens over time. The Miami Soar Mobile Homeowners were quick to raise rent by more than 50% during the pandemic. Then came the bill increases and fees - the residents of Miami Soar started getting charged monthly water bills that will range from \$100 to even up to \$500, plus a \$15 processing fee every month. (The water bill company "[5 Star Metering](#)," based in Ohio has used this tactic in other [trailer homes](#) around the country.)



Source: Pedro Portal - Miami Herald

Miami Soar Mobile Home residents were also charged \$50 a month for parking when they could previously park their cars for free. These are tactics of gentrification to push people out. For people living on a fixed income in a city where the cost of living is increasingly unmanageable, these added fees are the difference between making ends meet and losing their livelihood. Missing bills and owing money can result in liens against their trailers and ultimately the loss of their homes, which in some cases the trailer park itself would buy to rent...how convenient for them, less trailer owners to deal with and more opportunities for profit.

The trailer park is now owned by Miami Soar 575 Land Trust or Miami Soar 111 Land Trust, managed by David Mordekhay, Tom Grinberg and Gary Otto. (According to [the Real Deal](#)). So, what's a land trust? A "land trust" is an agreement, between the owner of a piece of land and a trustee/s, to manage the property in the wishes of the owner. This is a tactic of property owners to avoid taxes and more importantly to protect their personal assets from litigation. Landlords and landowners will keep their properties in trusts and under LLCs to ensure that if the abuse of their tenants ever comes back to bite them, they are not personally liable. This is of course totally legal.

Developers, property owners, and politicians have to respond to a continuous increase in population and persistent lack of affordable housing. The capitalist solution is to take advantage and build more housing to increase their profits, producing homes for the shrinking portion of the population that can afford it, while not caring about those who can't. The Miami Soar Land Trust, like many other corporations and developers, views housing not as a public good, but as an economic asset. Miami has quickly become one of the new hot spots in America and the rich are taking advantage of this thanks to politicians who support deregulation and endless tax breaks.



Those at the table of city planning have no regard for the middle- or low-income families of Miami, evidenced by laws passed centered around rich property owners instead of low-income folks and renters. For example, in Florida during one of the worst housing crises of our lifetime, they passed the Live Local Act, a law that promotes density-rich housing "development" despite what Miamians need, AFFORDABLE HOUSING. The Live Local Act:

- *Allows multifamily or mixed-use developments in industrial or commercial areas*
- *Bans municipalities from enacting rent control*
- *Gives tax breaks to developers and preempts certain local regulations over density, height, and zoning*

Whatever means we have of local pressure for exerting power as people are getting regulated away to promote a different design, a unified vision of developers and politicians to advance their own interests as capitalists. Their "investment" comes at the consequence of people who are, and will continue to be, priced out of the city. In Miami we're witnessing mixed-used developments, or apartment complexes with retail stores on the bottom, continue to pop up masked in promises of "bettering our communities," but better for who? Certainly not the 800 residents of Miami Soar who won't be able to afford another location anywhere close to the community that they have made their own. Even though one of the requirements for the development of this mega project is to present a study of places where tenants of Miami Soars can move, there is no requirement for the land trust to provide any of these residents with affordable housing. All they have to do is turn in a report.

So here we are to BREAK DOWN THE NUMBERS:

- *According to South Florida Business Journal, the yearly median income is \$35,680*
- *This turns to a monthly income of \$2,973 per month*
- *The median rental price in Little River is \$2,000 (According to realtor)*
- *Miami's median rental price is \$3,000 (Also according to realtor)*

These costs of living give the residents of Miami Soar no option to move to any other location in Miami. OUR CITY is being gentrified at a rapid speed. Gentrification is a capitalist method to derive endless wealth from the limited housing market through development and speculation. Because land and housing are assets and not goods organized in the interest of wider society, we all have to face the threat of getting gouged out of our homes to line capitalists' pockets. In this case, gentrification via mixed use development is the capitalist solution to two distinct problems: how to prioritize using land and how to create more room in a rapidly filling city. The capitalist solution will always place profit over people, so instead of updating the trailer park, they seek to tear it down to make more from renting to residential and business tenants. Instead of rent control, we get pushed out to make room for someone else, and are left with no other place to go.

There's a power imbalance in our city. Our communities are being destroyed because the masses have little control or role in city planning or the development of our neighborhoods. As environmental stressors, migration to the state, and consolidation of land under management groups and corporations continue, we will see further "development" meant to facilitate a society that only works for the capitalist class and the flush petite bourgeois. Representation doesn't come from attendance in city/county meetings on our own or voting for people who look like us. Instead, it will come from people coming together independent of these institutions, building our own power and giving them no choice but to respond to OUR interests.

So, what's the next step for the Miami Soar Mobile Homes?

The owners of the Miami Soar Land Trusts will need to meet with commissioners, and they will have to approve their special zoning for new development. This meeting does not have an established date yet, but some reports are expecting this between April and May.

We see Miami's prices rising and pushing people out, leaving little space for any poor or middle-class residents to be able to afford our city. You may be reading this thinking the mobile homes don't affect you, but the reality is that this is a trend that will end up affecting us all. It's time for us as a community to come together and build networks of resistance capable of putting a stop to this. Developers and politicians are organized in their own interests, now it's up to us to connect and rise against the injustices that are forcing us out. So, how do we organize in our own interests? It all starts by building communities with those around us. We must start creating networks of people who are affected by the same issues and are willing to work against the injustices capitalism forces. Our only shot at beating them is to fight back for our own interests together organized as an independent social force.



# HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE NOT WELCOME IN FLORIDA



Source: Daniel A. Varela -Miami Herald

As housing becomes more expensive and gentrification unleashes its tentacles, the city wants to be able to criminalize homelessness in order to legally keep the houseless out of communities, in hopes of making them “more desirable” for economic expansion.

A new ordinance passed, in Miami Beach, that will subject homeless people to arrest if they decline placement in a shelter, despite advocates’ concerns that the law would effectively make it illegal to be homeless in the city and fail to address underlying issues. Miami Beach already had a ban on outdoor sleeping on the books. But that ordinance required police to give people a warning before making an arrest, giving people an opportunity to relocate. The revised ordinance, which passed in a 4-3 vote, eliminates the requirement for a warning. A new state bill ([HB 1365](#)) was also recently passed and signed into law; it prohibits allowing areas for public camping without FL Department of Children and Families’ approval.

**“Housing itself is part of a larger economic structure.”**

While the tenants’ movement has seen many stages since it began in the late 1800s, we are now at a moment, collectively, where we can make significant changes. Housing itself is part of a larger economic structure.

We bear witness to housing being affected by the political whims of politicians who do not have the best interests of their constituents at heart. The perspective that we’re excited to share is that we don’t have to accept a boom-and-bust cycle of development and gentrification as the status quo. We as a local community can look right through these laws and ordinances and trace these tactics right back to capitalist greed. This isn’t a partisan issue. Both Democrats and Republicans are on the same side: profit.

We are all interconnected by one struggle. Although we may not be facing housing insecurity ourselves, we can stand in solidarity with people who are.

We can define what our definition of what a progressive alternative to these struggles might be, and we can work towards a greater alternative. Things may seem difficult or even impossible to change, but independent organizing and grassroots efforts through a progressive framework and with the perspective of a progressive future... has worked!

The revised ordinance, Sec. 70-45, strengthens the already existing camping ban in Miami Beach. This will subject homeless people to arrest if they decline placement in a shelter. It passed despite advocates’ concerns that the law will fail to address underlying issues and may further criminalize homelessness. A similar ordinance existed prior, but it included that a police officer had to warn them and allow them to relocate before arresting them; this new legislation will take that stipulation out. If they refuse placement in a shelter they will be arrested. The city also claims this is something residents of the area are concerned about. That in the light of public pressure, residents also want the homeless relocated out of their city.



Every year, we as residents of Florida are forced to be onlookers as corporate greed from developers and politicians alike rears its ugly head all around us. Many of us are forced to make difficult decisions with regards to housing, with what seems like little to no support from the supposed structures that are meant to protect us. Capitalists have no bounds, have no empathy, and hold nothing sacred in the pursuit of profit. As they carve out our communities and enrich themselves, they leave no space for us. This is purely a cash-grab, not a solution to real housing problems.

The homeless deserve our support instead of criminalization and further marginalization. Then to add fuel to the fire this ordinance will also cost us taxpayer money to fund. So not only is this legislation being completely fucked up because, it further empowers gentrification, this it also costs us as a community. The arrests cost us, the taxpayers, and seldom stick.

Based on Florida Department of Corrections information, it costs \$55.80 a day (that's \$20,367 a year) to keep just one person incarcerated in the state of Florida. Miami police officers waste hours of their time arresting and booking homeless people for a charge that will most likely be dropped and receiving overtime pay for their court appearances. Earning them thousands of dollars of additional income

The homeless and vulnerable of Miami Dade, oftentimes who are struggling with mental illness, addiction or PTSD all of which are NOT crimes. There are also countless valid reasons many homeless do not want to spend the night in a shelter, many fear falling victim to petty theft and single women fear harassment. Simply viewing the option of shelter or a night in jail for the homeless on Miami Beach negates looking at the root cause. Miami's soaring price of living is higher than anywhere else in the country, meaning the rising number of houseless people are mostly victims of inflation. This is also certainly not exclusively a Miami issue; we will see more and more legislation that both punishes and profits off of civilians falling behind during an economic crisis. Instead of investing in affordable housing for the area, those in power would rather simply punish those who cannot afford high priced housing. Not only that, but this also speaks to a greater trend affecting the country at large.



Source: Aberto GV Photography

According to the Associated Press, homelessness increased 12% nationwide. This is the highest it has ever been since the country began using the survey in 2007.

While this legislation in Miami Beach might be new, it illuminates how many other municipalities might attempt to combat an issue that is affecting every corner of our nation. It speaks to a wave of attempts to criminalize these populations, without amplifying real resources or attempting to address the root cause. Once again, South Florida is a microcosm of what many governments wish to implement across the country, especially as much of the pandemic aid that was curbing this increase comes to a halt. What does that mean? A lot of fucked up laws are tested here then make their way to the rest of the country.





Source: Marjorie Lynum via Flickr

## DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR? IT IS...

### HISTORICALLY

- Laws to control travel and access to land have existed since colonial times. Vagrancy laws were used to police the mobility and economic activities of the poor. People experiencing homelessness and ethnic minorities were especially vulnerable to arrest as a vagrant.
- Thousands of people in colonial America were arrested for vagrancy, usually for 30 to 60 days, sometimes longer, complicating their lives even further with financial and physical punishment.

### IN FLORIDA LAW

***This Miami Beach legislation is modeled after an Orlando ordinance that bans sleeping outdoors on public property in most cases.***

- This Orlando ordinance was upheld in 2000 by the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit.
- In the 1980s, Miami PD arrested homeless individuals for minor offenses like being in parks after dark, trying to scare them blatantly into leaving.
- The over policing got so bad it led to a lawsuit and then the Pottinger Agreement, protecting the homeless. However, new laws undermine these protections. This pattern of weaponizing legislation in Florida dates back to the 1970s, highlighted by a Supreme Court ruling in 1972 that struck down a vague vagrancy law in Jacksonville (Papachristou v. City of Jacksonville, 405 U.S. 156).

### NATIONWIDE

- "Similar legislation is also being seen in 'progressive' cities like Los Angeles, where Mayor Lauren Bass swiftly implemented emergency orders to tackle homelessness. This move has influenced neighboring cities like Santa Monica and Culver City to issue their own proclamations. However, while these efforts address visible signs of homelessness, they fail to tackle the root cause: a lack of affordable housing." from Alicia Victoria Lozano for [NBC News](#)
- January 2024: The supreme court is due to hear a case regarding the homeless, their encampments and if the arrest of these people constitute cruel and unusual punishment. Grants Pass, OR v. Johnson, Gloria, et al — is a challenge to a 2018 federal class action lawsuit filed by three people who argued that the city of Grants Pass's laws and customs illegally punished them for being involuntarily homeless. Attorneys representing the plaintiffs noted the dearth of affordable housing and homeless shelters in the city, and blasted Grants Pass's arguments that unhoused people could simply leave and go elsewhere. The case is the most significant legal challenge to the rights of homeless people in decades, and how the Court rules in a decision.



To be clear: the ultimate solution to this specific crisis would be for all of us to be provided housing, which as a matter of fact, can absolutely happen. There are enough empty homes to house every homeless person in the US, but capitalists do not want that to be our reality. In Miami especially, there are a lot of investment properties, Airbnb's, vacation homes, sitting unoccupied majority of the time... plus, regular old empty condos. There used to be an 8+ year condo glut in downtown Miami (meaning it would take 8 years to sell all the condos on the market in downtown Miami...and they were still building more, all while not filling the previously built ones. They would rather have these properties sit empty in hopes of profit instead of allowing people to occupy them in crisis. There are also enough funds in our government to provide basic housing to citizens in need. However not everyone in the Miami Beach community agrees with the legislation, and it only passed by a narrow vote.

***“Every year, we as residents of Florida are forced to be onlookers as corporate greed from developers and politicians alike rears its ugly head all around us.”***

City officials ignored all opposition. However, there are people in the community against this. Lotus House and Camillus House, both organizations based in Miami, are also avenues for people to volunteer, assist and get more information about conditions on the ground for homeless people living in Miami. Axis Helps Miami helps to place the homeless in shelters and temporary housing on their own terms rather than police enforcement. To be painfully honest though, none of these resources are capable of eradicating homelessness unfortunately but, they can put those concerned in a position to help. These solutions are limited. They can only provide a temporary relief to what is a larger structural housing crisis. No shelter, charities, or non-profit organizations are capable of eradicating homelessness. They provide a temporary band aid to those without housing. The ultimate tool to push back on this type of legislation is to be independently organized. When people are unified around a truly progressive political reality it can be transformative. Reach out to One Struggle for more information about organizing. Together, we can gather enough people and resources to stop being pushed around by the state and start to make a difference in our own lives and communities.



Source: Diego Duckenfield-Lopez



---

## GLOSSARY

### CAPITALISM

An economic, social, and political arrangement built on the fundamental conflict between capital and labor. Capital (money, raw materials, land, and commodities) is accumulated by the capitalist class (a small minority of society) by paying the working class less than the value of what they produce. To hide this conflict, capitalism uses force... as well as ideology... to convince all classes that capitalist domination is natural and what's best for society. Capitalism is expressed through the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class in the drive for ever increasing profits. Profit requires constant expansion into new markets and reduction of costs, including materials and wages. This looks like prison slave labor, fracking, privatized education, moving jobs to countries where it's easier to exploit workers, the gig economy, and student debt.

### PETIT BOURGEOISIE

The petite bourgeoisie (PB) is a buffer class between the capitalist class and the working class. Capitalists exploit workers and use the PB - Ex. white collar and gig economy employees - to create a comfortable subset of people complacent in their own domination under capitalism. They may resist domination, but because they are not an exploited class, their resistance only serves to reform capitalism, rather than destroy it. Since the PB's work is not one to create goods. In waging their class struggle, the PB consistently exercises an ideology of elitism towards the working class, trying to displace working class leadership and converting issues of collective liberation into their own individualistic endeavors.

## CALL TO ACTION

Decisions Florida's politicians and developers make are beneficial to them but are at the direct expense of social and political needs of the constituents who live here. We need solutions that address the root problems of capitalism and imperialism, rather than solutions that put a band-aid on the symptoms of community decay.

Join us in growing our strength and building power to fight against our common enemies: capitalists and imperialists. Our liberation and that of the global exploited classes depend on our ability to construct powerful independent organizations. Together, through a political line forged in unity and struggle, we can challenge the system that oppresses us. A system which has no interest in improving our living conditions or guaranteeing fair housing!

Let this be the moment when we work together and view our struggles are interconnected, to stand up against capitalists. History has shown us that our power isn't in spontaneous protests or behind an election booth. Our power is represented when we grow as independent, combative, and principled members of our local community. What affects Broward, Dade, and the Palm Beaches affects all of Florida!

Remember, every voice counts, and all of your insights and personal stories are important. Through mobilizing others around the goals we all share, we have the power to create meaningful and lasting change in our communities and beyond. We've been shown time and time again that political unity and collective power are the way through. Get in touch, get organized, and let's build a future free from exploitation and oppression. Let's begin!





# ONE STRUGGLE

an anti-capitalist / anti-imperialist initiative

How did reading these articles make you feel? Did you feel inspired to take action? Perhaps do something BEYOND THE HEADLINES? But not sure how?

We are all capable of action even though we may not know where to start. We are not helpless, you are not helpless. We continue to take beatings as South Florida residents and you don't have to take it. Organize. What do we mean by organize? Do you have friends, coworkers and neighbors that feel the same way you do? Of course you do, reach out, communicate and work together to build networks of resistance.

You do have the power to discuss and gather a group of concerned community members to rally around the issues we are facing. You can do this on your own initiative or reach out to groups like us at One Struggle who are already working independently to address our needs, bring awareness and help make change.

What do we mean by organized and working independently? We aren't attached to any major charities, nonprofits, or political parties thus, we are organizing in the interests of us: the everyday residents of South Florida and you can and should too. Independent organization is possible and necessary in order to honor the interest of the people at large and not for any private interests.

If you eager more about us or want general advice on organizing on your own reach out.

 [Onestruggle.southflorida@gmail.com](mailto:Onestruggle.southflorida@gmail.com)

 [Onestruggle.net](http://Onestruggle.net)

 [OneStruggle](https://www.facebook.com/OneStruggle)

 [SeedsofUnity](https://www.instagram.com/SeedsofUnity)

 [OneStruggleSF](https://twitter.com/OneStruggleSF)

