The Government Run Homeless Scam And How It Impacts You Part 2 - An ACCESS Special Report

October 5, 2018 - In Part 1 of this series, we gave you some background on what is driving the construction of so-called homeless shelters by politicians across the country. Hint, follow the money. In this part of our series, we talk a little about what the word "homeless" actually means when uttered by politicians.

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Identifying the homeless has become a significant issue in communities across the United States. You probably think of someone who is homeless and deserving of help as a person who lost a job and then lost their home. Or perhaps it's someone who was forced out of their home due to huge medical bills. There are dozens of reasons that people can lose the roof over their heads through no fault of their own. And helping people recover from those circumstances is a worthy cause.

But many of the people you see on the streets of America don't fit into the group just mentioned. Instead they are substance abusers, the mentally ill or the recently incarcerated including violent offenders. You may think that providing these people with homes is also a noble cause. Unfortunately, there are numerous failed homeless housing projects across the country that target this type of resident. The reason is simple. Providing housing without requiring treatment, sobriety and supervision further enables them to continue their current habits. In most cases, the people that fit into this group are there because of a series of bad personal decisions that they've made over the course of their lives. A better word for them would be vagrants.

The differences between cities that are having success in treating vagrancy issues and those that are failing are stark. Santa Monica, California has a number of facilities that actually work. That's largely due to the fact that their facilities have rules and they enforce them. They will kick you out of their facilities if you violate those rules. Drug and alcohol use are not allowed. And if you live in one of their facilities and become a nuisance to local businesses or residents, you'll find yourself back on the street too.

Drive across the city line into Los Angeles and the story is completely different. You can easily find tent cities in many areas of the city. And the Mayor has actually said that he wants to remove any of the reasons that homeless people haven't wanted to live in shelters so sobriety and treatment will not be required of shelter residents. Never mind the evidence.

This approach is both a waste of money and a complete disservice to those who are homeless through no fault of their own. It actually means that a woman fleeing domestic violence, perhaps with her children, can be placed in a room that is next door to a convicted sex offender. History shows that nonviolent homeless people in this situation prefer to remain on the street because it is actually safer for them than entering a shelter. This is one of the primary reasons that many cities can't fill the beds in existing shelters. Yet they want to build even more of them without making any changes.

As bad as this sounds, it isn't the worst of it. Many of the cities building these projects are placing them in established neighborhoods; something that is hard to fathom when you consider the background of the occupants. In Los Angeles, the cities own data shows that 70% to 80% of the beds in these facilities will be filled with vagrants described above. The results of this are completely foreseeable, but they are being driven by the huge amounts of cash involved.

For example, Seattle opened up a permanent supportive housing (PSH) facility in 2015. PSHs are facilities that provide drug and mental health treatment; which may or may not be required depending upon the city. My any measure, Seattle's PSH has been a disaster for the neighborhood it is in.

In the two years after it opened, crime has and emergency responder calls have gone through the roof. Calls to the police rose 91% compared to the two years prior to the facility opening. And calls to the fire department were up a staggering 400%; presumably from drug overdoses. Crime in the surrounding neighborhood has risen by 103%. There isn't a neighborhood in the country that would welcome those statistics.

Yet politicians across the nation continue to push for additional facilities. In many cases, these politicians are receiving major support from the developers, charitable organizations and personal interest groups that are making money from building and operating the facilities in question. Moreover, that support is often coming from groups that do not reside in the areas that are negatively impacted by them. For residents of these areas, it's a perfect storm.

For home and business owners, it can also be a financial storm in the form of reduced real estate prices and reduced business. Landlords near vagrant facilities are finding it hard to rent; both apartments and office space. There losses are very real and can be life altering. We'll talk about this in depth in Part 4 of our series, but before we do that we'll shine a brighter light on the government corruption that has taken root and is a driving factor in homeless construction around the nation. That will be in Part 3, next week.
byJim Malmberg
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