December 2015

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

WITHOUT HOUSING

DECADES OF FEDERAL HOUSING CUTBACKS & MASSIVE HOMELESSNESS

& A HOMELESS BILL OF RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

WRAP

HOUSE KEYS NOT HANDCUFFS

www.wraphome.org

Artwork by Ronnie Goodman

Member Organizations

Coalition on Homelessness
San Francisco, CA
www.cohsf.org/en/

Denver Homeless Out Loud
Denver, CO
www.denverhomelessoutloud.org

Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles, CA
www.cangress.org

Right 2 Survive PDX
Portland, OR
www.right2survive.wordpress.com

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
Sacramento, CA
www.sacshoc.org

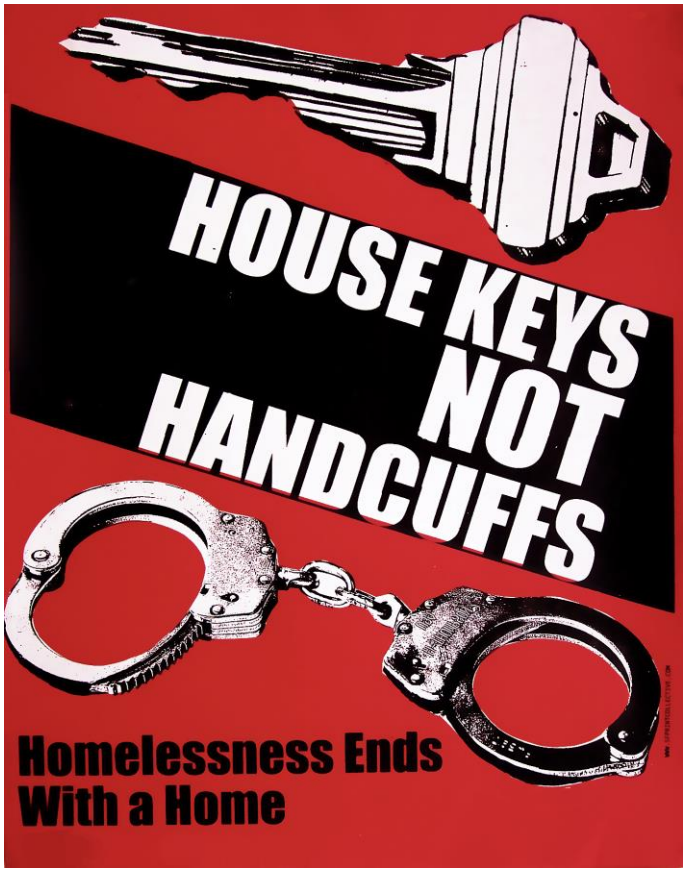
St. Mary's Center
Oakland, CA
www.stmaryscenter.org

Sisters Of The Road
Portland, OR
www.sistersoftheroad.org

Street Roots
Portland, OR
www.streetroots.org

Street Spirit
San Francisco, CA
www.thestreetspirit.org

Overview



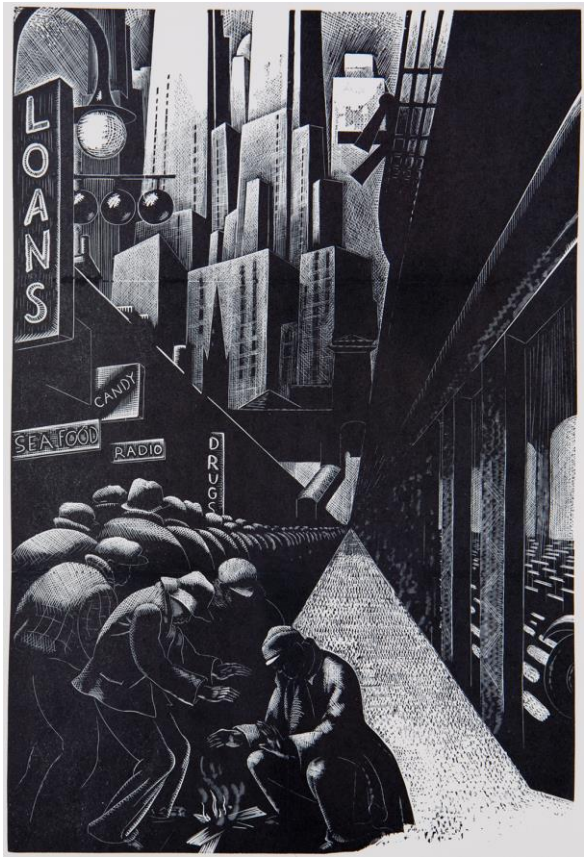
Artist: San Francisco Print Collective

1. **Historical Context**
2. **Political & Economic Factors**
3. **Cuts to Low-Income Housing Programs**
4. **Criminalization of Homelessness**
5. **Band-Aid Solutions**
6. **Federal Funding Priorities**
7. **What *must* be done!**

A Tale of Two Acts

Over the last century there have been two episodes of mass homelessness in the United States. Legislation from each era tells the story…

Act I



Artist: Claire Leighton

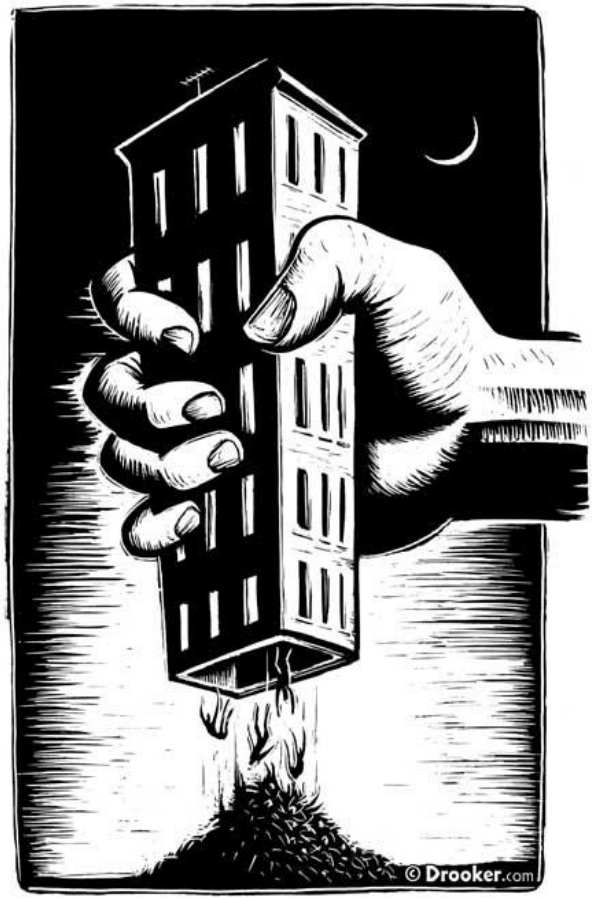
- **The Housing Act of 1937 committed:**

  "to remedy the unsafe & unsanitary housing conditions & the acute shortage of decent, safe, & sanitary dwellings for families of lower income…"

Act II

- **The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act of 1998 declared:**

"the Federal Government cannot through its direct action alone provide housing of every American, or even the majority of its citizens."



Artist: Eric Drooker

Housing As Commodity

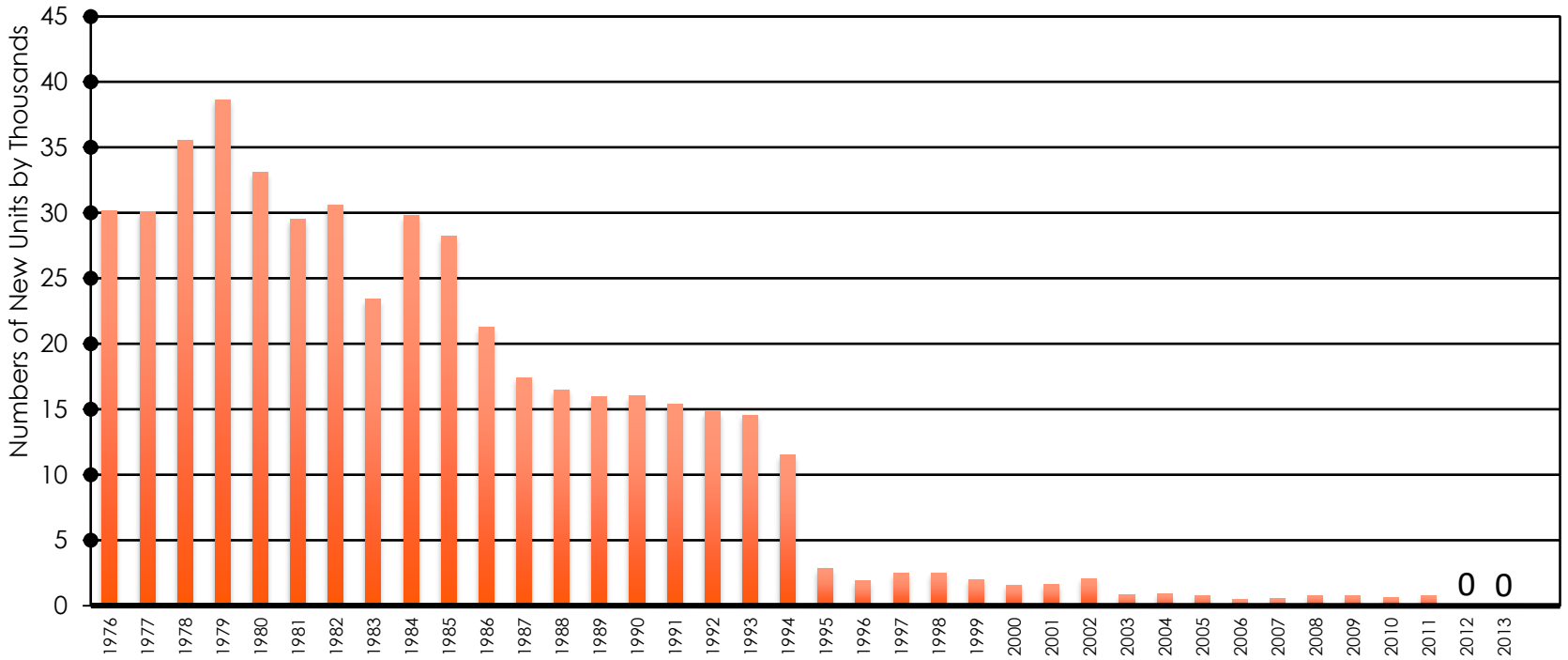
- **Feds turn housing over to private market in the 1970s.**
- **261,419 Units of Public Housing lost through sale, demolition & HOPE VI – Estimates including Project based Section 8 well over 360,000.**
- **Over 5 million foreclosures from 2008 - 2014.**
- **13 million vacant housing units in 2013.**

Artist: Jos Sances

Rural Housing Cuts

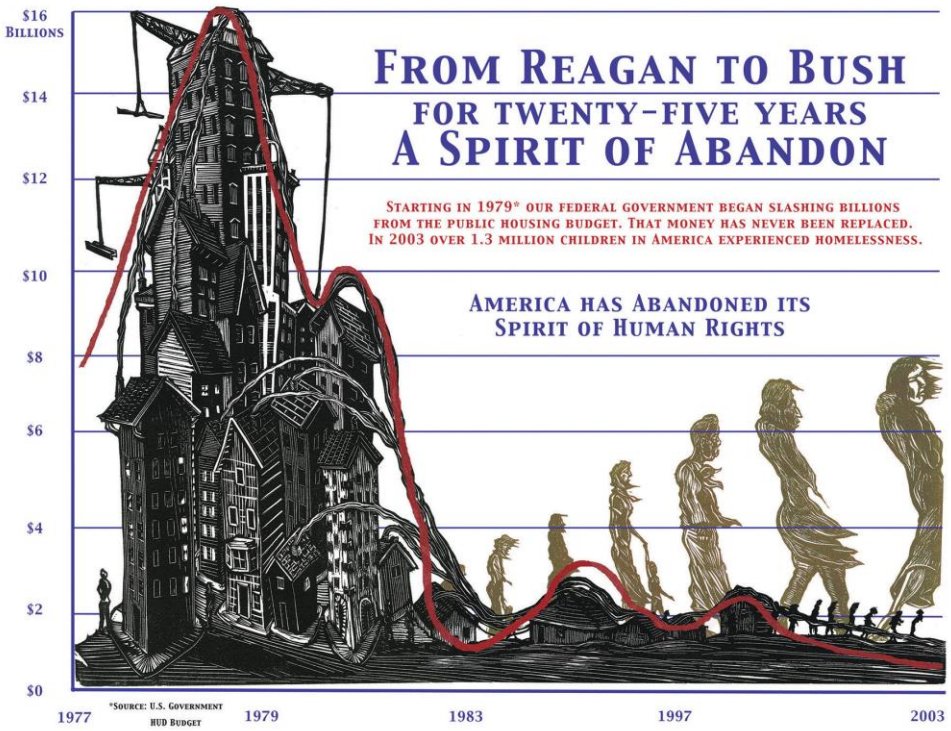
USDA built 38,650 affordable housing units in 1979 & only 763 in 2011 — in 2012 & 2013 the number is 0.

Rural Affordable Housing Units Created by Section 515 (USDA)



Starving Public Housing

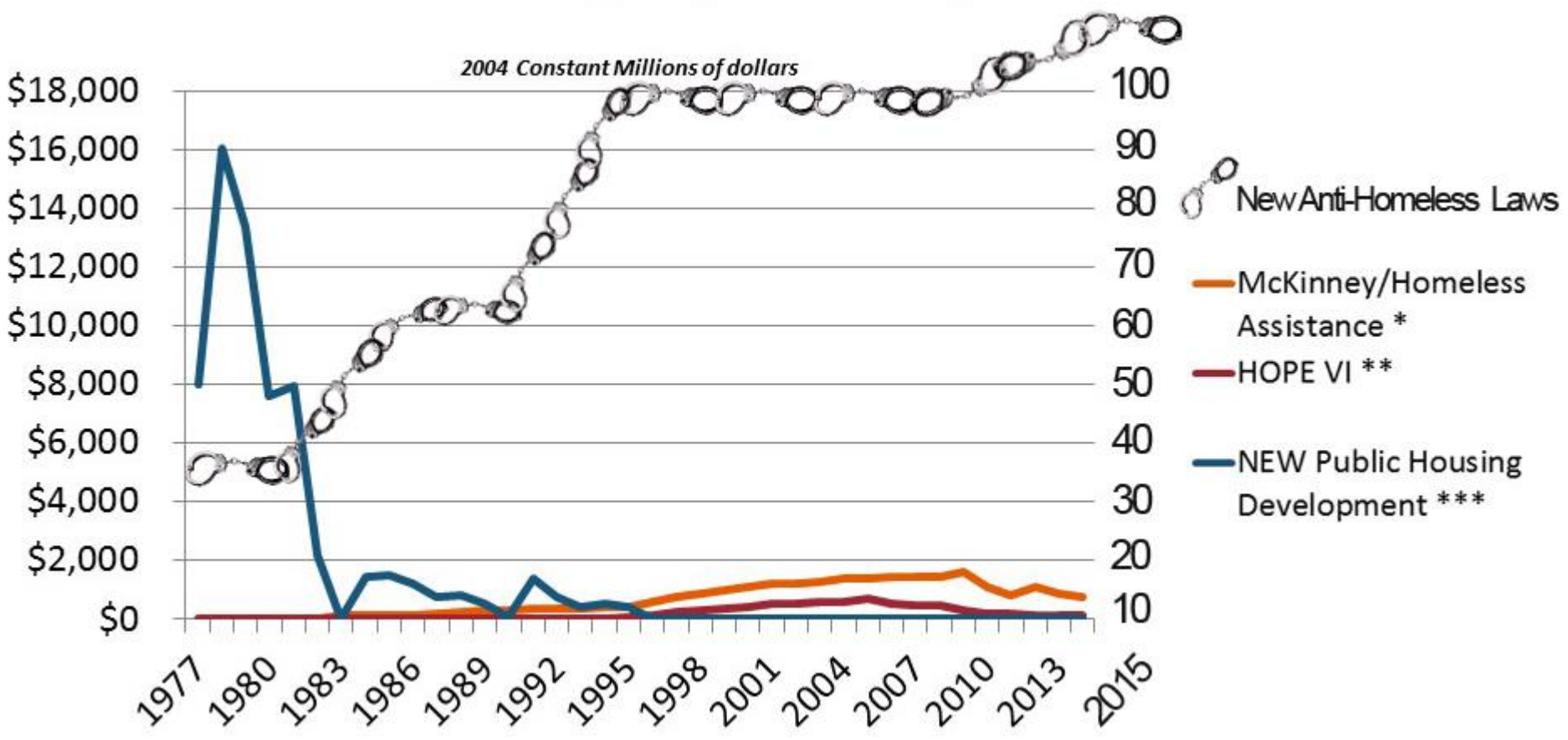
- Over 260,000 units lost through sales, demolition, & HOPE VI program.
- $26 billion in repairs needed due to ongoing capital fund cuts.
- HUD now says only private investment can save public housing.
- New demonstration allows 60,00(units to be mortgaged off.
- Nation's most permanent form of low-income housing is being lost.



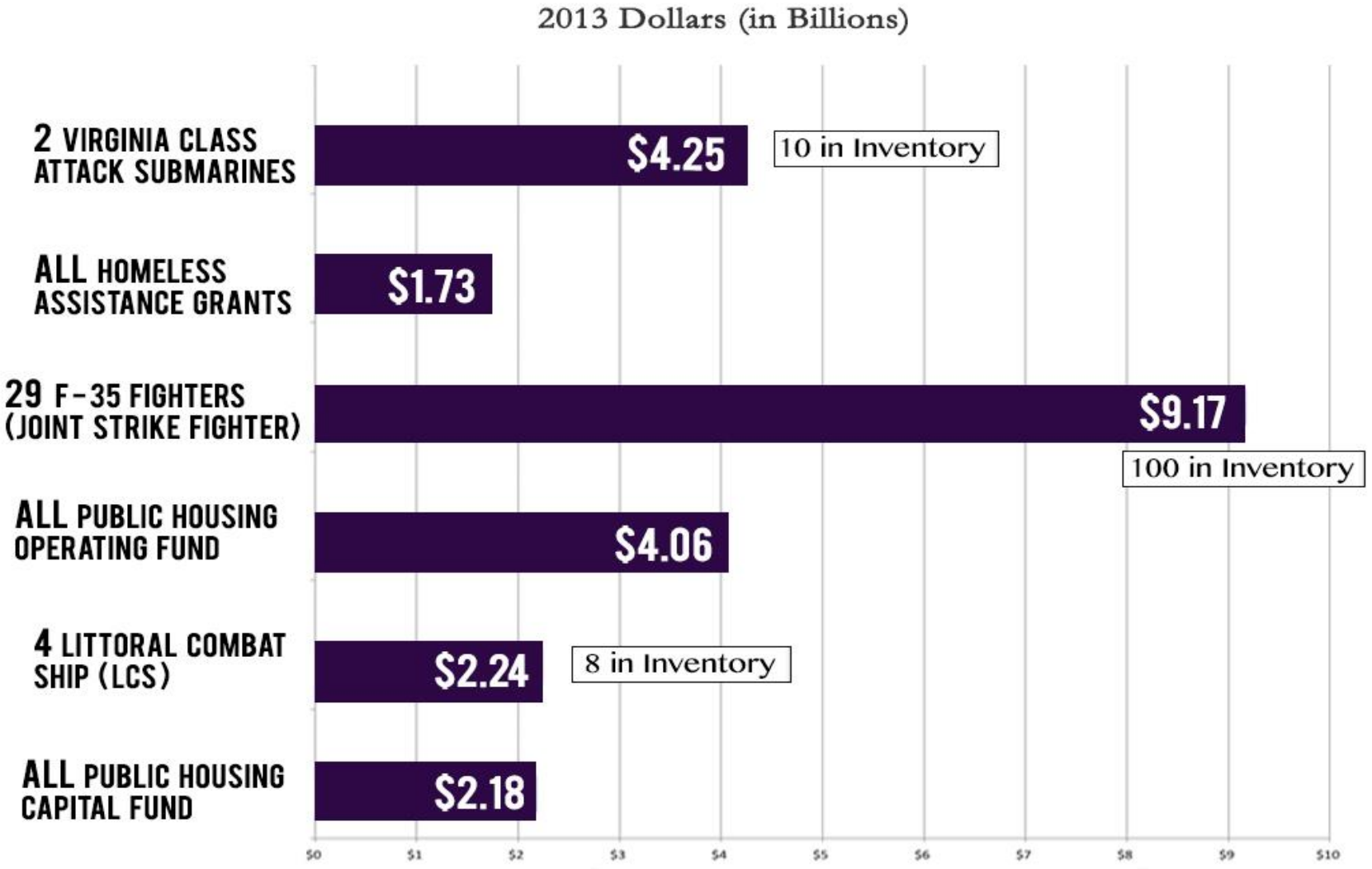
Artist: Art Hazelwood

Cause and Effect

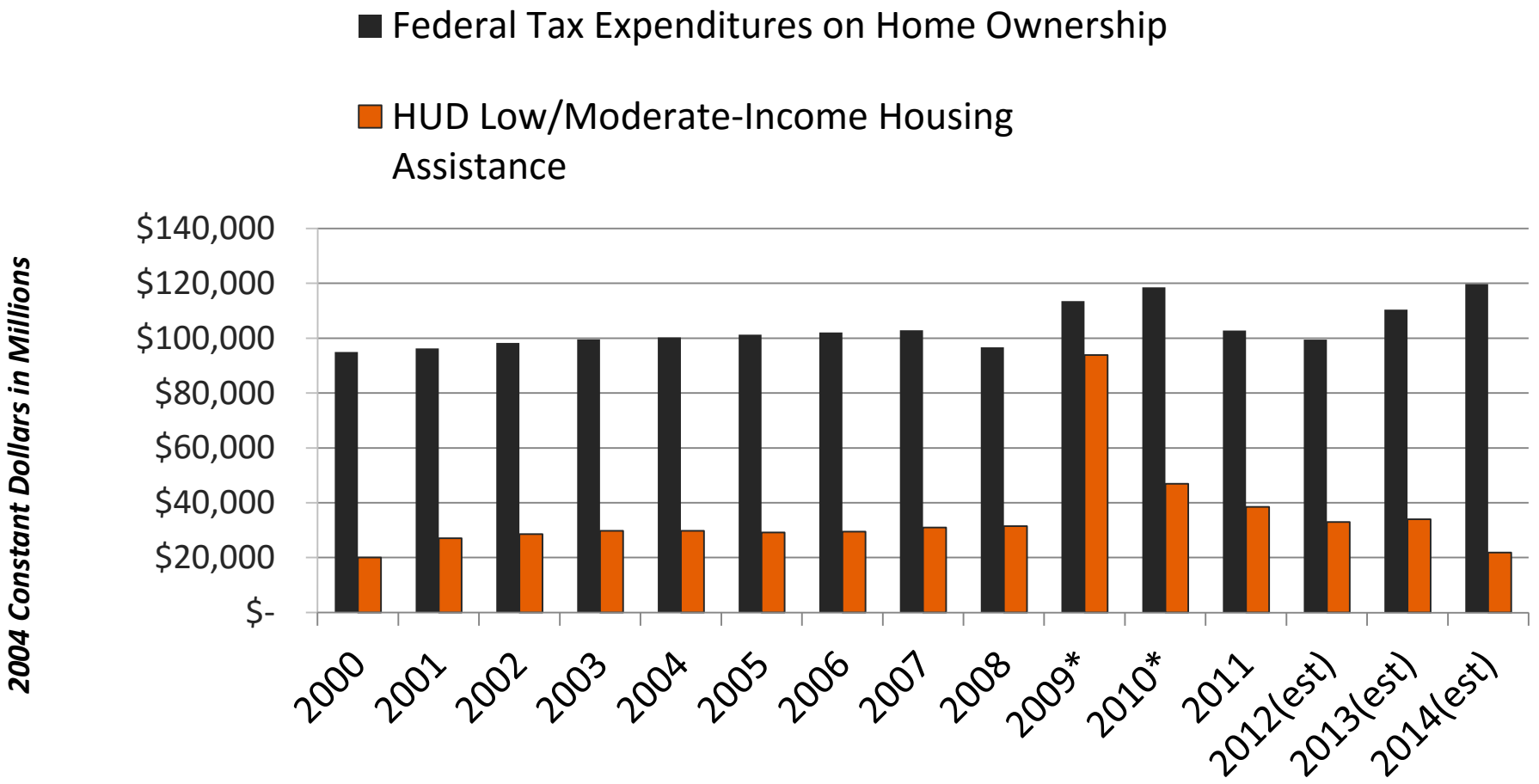
HUD's budget authority was cut by 77% from 1978 to 1983.
Since 1983 Laws Criminalizing Homelessness tripled (Calif).



Comparison of Federal Funding Priorities

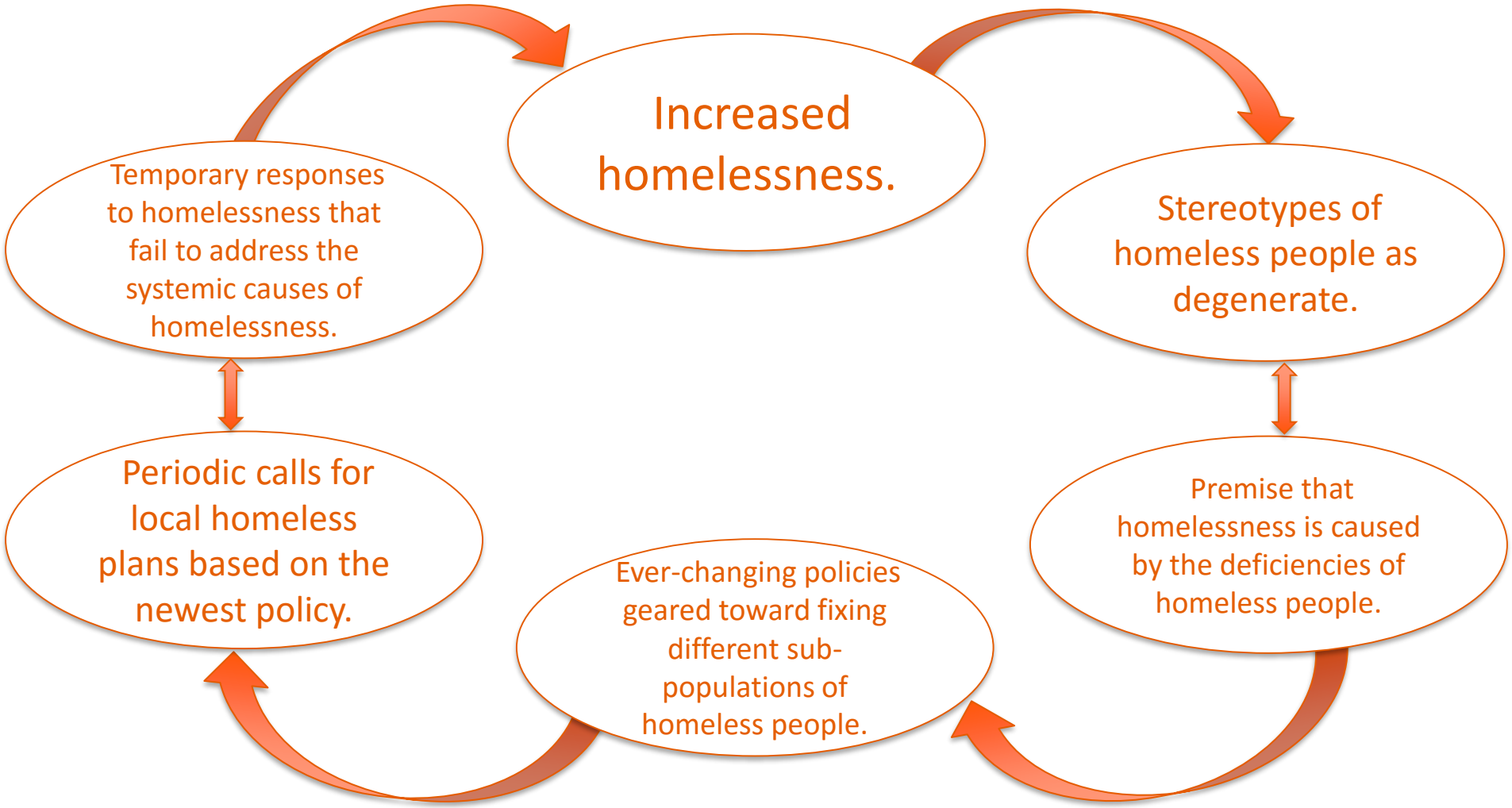


Mortgage Interest Deductions



** Includes stimulus funding under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.*

The Vicious Cycle of Homeless Policy



Race & Homelessness

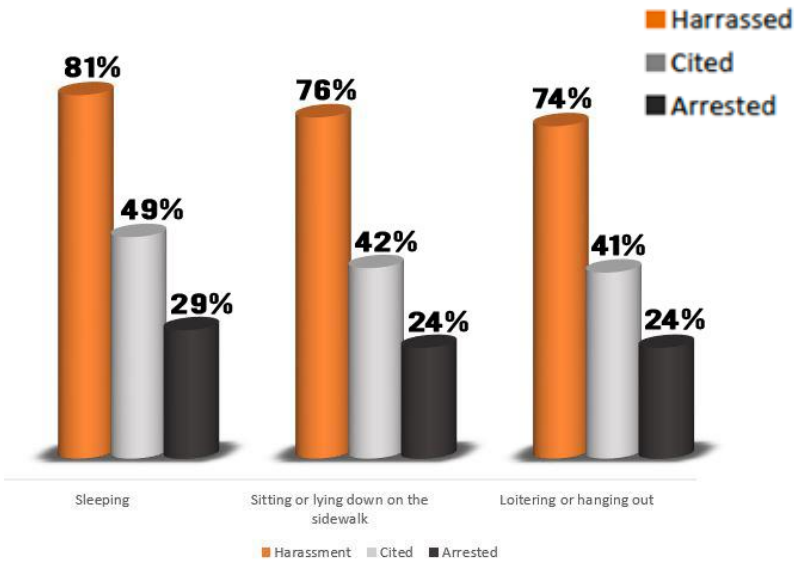
Race/Ethnicity	Estimated % of nation's total population (from US Census Data 2010	Estimated % of nation's homeless population (homeless counts/surveys between 1991 and 2009)
African-American	12.6%	40-56%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8% - 0.2%	1-3% - 1%
Hispanic/Latino	16.3%	12-15%
Native American	0.9%	3-4%
White	72.4%	32-39%

Criminalization of Homelessness / Poverty

At the heart of our Civil Rights work is outreach to homeless and poor people that documents their experiences with local police and private security. We have recently surveyed 1,388 people in five states and twelve cities. There can be no denying that "Broken Windows," "Quality of Life," "Civil Sidewalks," and "Safer Cities" initiatives are anything less than a reincarnation of "Ugly Laws," "Anti-Okie laws," "Sundown Towns," "Bracero Treaty" and "Jim Crow" when you hear directly the voices of those who are the targets of today's campaigns.

The main "illegal offenses" that homeless people are being targeted with:

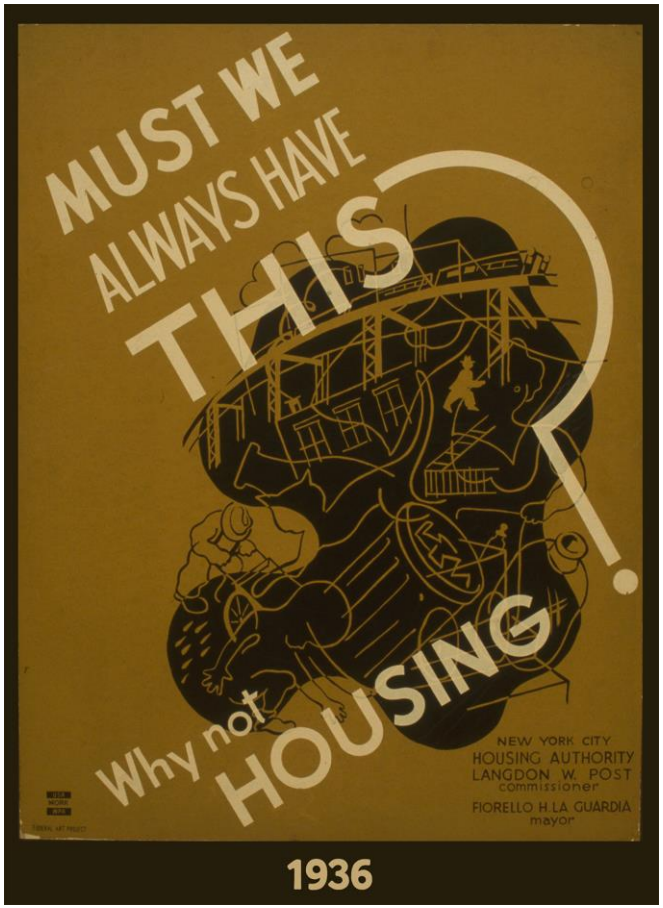
* **81%** for sleeping, with **49%** of these people cited and **29%** arrested
* **76%** for sitting or lying down, with **42%** of these people cited and **24%** arrested
* **74%** for loitering or hanging out, with **41%** of these people cited and **24%** arrested



Do you know of places where it is safe and legal for you to sleep outside?
* **73%** No
* ***27%*** Yes

Historical Criminalization

The United States has a long history of using mean- spirited and often brutal laws to keep “certain” people out of public consciousness. Jim Crow, Sundown towns and Anti-Okie laws, Operation Wetback and Ugly laws - they all targeted various populations based on their racial, economic, social, immigration or disability status. Understanding this history is important. Today’s exclusionary and discriminatory laws target homeless people; they criminalize sleeping, sitting, loitering, panhandling and even food-sharing in public spaces. Just like the laws from our past, they deny people their right to exist in local communities.



Right *to* Rest Model Legislation
Homeless Bill *of* Rights Campaign

Our Right to Rest Act (#Right2Rest) in Oregon, California & Colorado proposes legislation that protects the following rights and prohibits the enforcement of any local laws that violate these rights:

- Right to move freely, rest, sleep, pray and be protected in public space without discrimination.
- Right to rest in public spaces and protect oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner.
- Right to occupy a legally parked vehicle.
- Right to share food and eat in public.

Homeless Bill *of* Rights Campaign

Laws that segregate, that make criminals of people based on their status rather than their behavior, are not just sad relics from history. Our HBR campaign stands on the shoulders of social justice campaigns of the past. It seeks to provide a framework for communities to protect the following rights and prohibit the enforcement of local laws that violate these rights:

1. Right to move freely, rest, sleep, & pray and be protected in public spaces without discrimination.
2. Right to occupy a legally parked vehicle.
3. Right to share food and eat in public.
4. Right to legal counsel if being prosecuted.
5. Right to 24-hour access to "hygiene facilities."
6. Require judges consider necessity defense when hearing homeless related cases.

Organizational Endorsers

AS OF MAY 2015

173 ORGANIZATIONS
HAVE JOINED THIS CAMPAIGN

Organize Around People

Artist: Art Hazelwood

- **Build alliances across race, nationality, class, gender, & religion.**
- **Connect organizing for housing to education, health care, dignified work, immigrant rights, Native People's sovereignty, & economic security.**
- **Value mutual humanity.**

Download Without Housing

Join the Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign

www.wraphome.org