Civil Rights Committee Notes May 18, 2021

1. participants
2. Bob and Anita were selected to continue as Chair for the Civil Rights Committee. Sadly, Sue reported that Anita lost her partner and could not be on the call.
3. Update on the BAHN Campaign based on the discussion at the Membership Meeting. Notes were previously distributed (if you need a copy please let me know). We discussed there being a civil rights committee set up to add more meat to the bone of the plan to address racial equity and civil rights legislation to protect our constituents. This is a long term plan while this committee is focused more on immediate concerns and will continue. The campaign will make decisions on strategy and an organizing plan for local outreach and involvement in leaders who have experienced homelessness. The soft launch for the campaign will be in early June and the full launch will be late in the month. Website will be up soon on the campaign. We are gathering partners right now. We will reach out to those on this committee to join one of the Campaign committees as well.
4. Donald wants to set up a subcommittee to discuss a more research based hate crimes report involving a university/consultant gathering facts from coroners and police and not just having anecdotal information. We want to publish in late 2022, and it may involve just doing intensive research on 3 or 4 cities to show the extent of violence that happens everyday to people experiencing homelessness. Rachel, Renee, Bob, Rajni, Bill, Heather and Laura all volunteered for this subcommittee.
5. Prop B in Austin-- it was decided is a dangerous trend that we do not want replicated in other cities and so NCH should get involved. Guests from Echo Austin who gave an overview of the proposition, its history and the large amounts of money pumped into this campaign and the current results of this law. Police began giving notice of those living outside that they need to relocate before June 13 or would face ticketing and/or arrest. This was driven by outside money and the Governor’s office in Texas.  Local officials have tried to provide options for those living outside, but have not provided additional resources or made additional housing available because of the tight housing market. There was agreement that involving police would never result in a humane result for the people living outside or the finding of housing for everyone involved. Local outreach workers were not even sent in to offer help, but are doing this on their own. Faith leaders did oppose the criminalization of homeless pple. Law enforcement was the first response after this law was passed. Sue said that the city would have to declare criminalization efforts on their Continuum application. Staff will work with the ECHO director on some options for national involvement. We could circulate a sign on letter, write to the Mayor about the long history of failed efforts to relocate individuals by force, we could attempt to organize the individuals on the ground to resist or take other actions among those most impacted by this policy. Details to come.
6. Iowa recently passed a law striking down the local communities laws that protect source of income in the application process for an apartment.  Basically, Des Moines and others outlawed the phrase "No Section 8" in advertisements and in the landlord selection process for tenants.  The State of Iowa made it illegal for those communities to ban "No Section 8" ads.  Donald is going to continue to seek HUD involvement. Brian will reach out to the Justice Department again to see if there is interest in this clearly racist policy. We were also given a couple of national groups to see if they were going to follow up that we could partner with on national litigation. We would also see if the ACLU was willing to be involved.
7. WRAP Advocacy from the West Coast updates. Paul said that he was very concerned with the recent federal court decisions striking down the eviction moratoriums and the flood of people who may be without housing. He said that there had to be a connection to the massive numbers of sweeps that were taking place around the country. He talked about the level of brutality going on in the streets with all these sweeps and violent police. He also expressed concern about the immigrant population being denied vaccines and emergency rental housing. He understood there were rules against this, but on the ground no one is enforcing these rules. No one is cracking down on these violations. WRAP has added a few cities and now is in 14 communities.
8. Did not have time to discuss the newsletter. New one later this week.
9. Staff updates just two mentioned. No response from Publix about the cop who beat up the homeless guy from our advocacy. Following up with the NAACP of San Diego about the person exp. homelessness beaten by the SDPD on video.

Other updates that we did not have time to discuss

1. Met with Chicago Coalition trying to bring them on the committee and may partner with them on a training program for local leaders.
2. NCH posted an action alert about the loss of federal extended unemployment
3. Need to work with national partners about the threat faced by Cicero Institute to people exp. homelessness nationally.
4. Met with the NY Coalition for the Homeless about civil rights issues.