

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Hear Our Voice - Part 7



IF JOSE IS DEPORTED, WILL MARIA BECOME HOMELESS

By Wanda Sue Parrott

MARCHING came first, followed by huddles. If huddling succeeded, you're protesting something during the Trump administration's 100-day honeymoon period.

My protest subject remains homelessness.

Last week, a discussion of non-sheltered persons' trash morphed into the political hot-potato:

If Jose, an undocumented alien with a criminal record, is legally deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (aka ICE), will his Mexican-born wife, Maria, and their American-born children become homeless?

The answer might be less-speculative after Senate Bill 54 is heard by the California Assembly.

Introducing Sb 54—The “California Values Act”

Senator Pro Tempore Kevin DeLeon (D-Los Angeles) presented the bill as an emergency measure last December in defiance of President Donald J. Trump's threatened deportation of undocumented immigrants.

In essence, SB 54 declares that, as a sanctuary state, California will not cooperate with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (aka ICE) in deportation of undocumented immigrants, despite presidential threats to withhold federal funding to states and cities that offer safe haven to illegal immigrants and refugees.

Last amended March 6, to allow for state law enforcement agencies to cooperate with ICE in capture and/or removal of criminals, drug dealers, terrorists and other law-breakers, the “Safe Haven” legislation was passed on March 13 by the Senate Appropriations Committee and is headed to the full Senate.

If it passes, it will go to the Assembly, and ultimately to Gov. Jerry Brown.

If the governor signs SB 54 into law, California will officially become the Sanctuary State.

Several California cities and churches have already declared themselves as Sanctuaries, including four Unitarian Universalist churches, the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Monterey Calls Itself A Welcoming, Rather Than Sanctuary, County

Most Monterey schools are refugee-and-immigrant friendly.

The city of Seaside is considering the option, and Salinas opted out, of becoming a Sanctuary City.

Salinas, however, decided on March 6 to sue the Trump administration for unconstitutional bullying.

San Francisco is hosting a Sanctuary Restaurant movement, motto of which is "A place at the table for everyone."

A Bed For Everybody?

What about a bed for everyone? Especially if one or more income-producing family members is deported? California now has 64,000 foster children needing to be adopted. Will abandoned immigrants' and/or lost refugees' children add to that number?

Latino students in the MPUSD have increased from 22.6 percent in 1995-1996 to 57.3 percent in 2015-2016.

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors' Resolution 17-042, dated Feb. 14, includes language recognizing that foreign-born residents make up more than 30 percent of Monterey County's total population, and 33.4 percent of California business owners, with an expected net growth rate of 85 percent over the next 20 years.

Hispanic Home-Sharing In Monterey

Latinos' shelter in Monterey involves "doubling up."

In Seaside at dusk, residential streets fill with leased, rented or privately owned late-model vans, trucks, cruisers, and RVs big enough to sleep in, if necessary.

Most of the vehicles are gone shortly after sunrise. Why?

Drivers leave their rent-a-beds to deliver children to school or childcare, then go to work in restaurants, hotels, the fields or packing plants.

Multiple families sleep in shifts on the same mattresses or couches, while others bed down in sheds 120 square feet or less in space. Music is loud. Space is limited. Homelessness is low.

What's next? Let's start with what is known about homelessness and Hispanic women in Monterey today.

Homeless Latinas In Monterey County

There are presently around 500 homeless women living on the Monterey Peninsula; 60 percent are white, with the rest being Latinas, African Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

According to the 2016 "Homeless Women in Monterey County--Key Findings" by Monterey County Dept. of Social Services and County of Monterey Health Dept., with funding from the Community Foundation for Monterey County:

Of 249 homeless women served by the Housing Resource Center, between 2015 and 2016, 61 identified as being Latina. Of them, 217 had children.

In the event sanctuary city status (or whatever other name is applied) fails to prevent deportation of income-earning spouses, is it possible resulting crossovers will cause a virtual explosion of homeless women and children throughout Monterey County?

Homeless women who receive government benefits include 242 in Seaside, 118 in Monterey and 100 in Marina. Number of undocumented non-benefit-receiving homeless statistics for Latinas are unknown.

If there weren't so much wrongdoing that needs protesting, we might see one thing that's right because of the new chief executive's bizarre behavior during his first seven weeks in office:

America's grass roots are growing. And they've never looked greener.

Should District 29 Assemblyman Mark Stone support SB 54? Call him at 1-888-271-8515 or send a postcard to: 701 Ocean St., #318b, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

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