

To lawmakers plotting a raid on funds for affordable housing. Cut that out.

By Jerry Durham | March 30, 2021

Raid on affordable housing fund

I read with much disappointment the article by John Kennedy of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune and USA TODAY Network. “GOP plan slashes funds for affordable housing.” This practice has continued for years and despite promises by the governor this year it appears to be the case again. Every level of our government recognizes and publicly admits that the shortage of affordable housing is critical but this continues to be talk only.

We all understand the importance of sewer conversion, climate change and the health of manatees but we are talking about people’s basic needs to house themselves and their families. As the article points out, a tremendous amount of low-income people are paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing. These are the people who serve our communities, work in our restaurants, pack our groceries, maintain our properties and provide other essential services.

As past president of the Federation of Manufactured Home Owners of Florida, Inc., I witnessed a once affordable housing option being diminished. Major out of state corporations are coming in and bidding for properties five and 10 times more than the assessed values. They in turn are raising the rents. So called “trailer parks” are being closed to turn the land into more expensive housing options.

Landlords are also taking advantage of the market and increasing their rents. It is time to write your legislators and tell them to leave the affordable housing trust fund intact. The trust fund is dedicated to increasing affordable housing.

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