



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Thursday October 21st, 2021.

### **Sunnydale and Potrero Hill Residents Organize to Expose Neglect and Demand Repairs**

For years, the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) has engaged in a consistent and extreme pattern of willful negligence of its properties, irresponsibly forcing residents to inhabit dangerous apartments which have major mold problems, pest infestations, and the like. Residents at Sunnydale and Potrero Hill, the two remaining public housing developments in San Francisco, are fed up with SFHA's inaction and excuses. Residents are organizing with their neighbors to stand together and demand that their apartments and buildings be repaired, while remaining public housing and not handed over to private developers and management companies.

SFHA is required to provide its tenants with apartments that meet a minimum standard for cleanliness and habitability as defined in California Civil Code Section 1941.1. Enclosed are a series of letters and photos of conditions at Sunnydale and Potrero Hill showing that SFHA is consistently failing to meet these requirements. Many tenants have filed dozens of work orders and complaints about these problems, only to face disrespect and inaction from SFHA managers. There is no possible conclusion we can draw other than that SFHA let these properties fall into disrepair in order to justify its privatization and HOPE SF redevelopment schemes, and plans to continue doing so.

SFHA and their developer partners portray privatization as the best solution to the capital needs of public housing and therefore the best way to address SFHA properties' state of disrepair. In reality, this is a bait-and-switch. When private developers and management companies take over, they have a million ways to officially and unofficially displace many of the residents: requiring tenants to re-apply and qualify to return, new and unreasonable rules, botched relocations, mass evictions, and more. And even when privatizations do not lead to immediate mass displacement, they set the stage for such displacement over the longer term by replacing public housing with combinations of non-subsidized, often extremely expensive units and Section 8.

The HOPE SF redevelopment scheme threatens to eventually demolish all the buildings at Sunnydale and Potrero Hill so that developers Mercy Housing, Related California, and BRIDGE Housing can build "mixed income developments" including over a thousand market rate units. In the interim, SFHA plans to hand over all the buildings at the two properties to the Eugene Burger Management Corporation via an "accelerated disposition" by the end of 2022, starting with hundreds of units being privatized this December. This would eliminate the remaining public housing in the city.

Through these privatization schemes in San Francisco and across the country, huge amounts of wealth are passing from public to private hands. Developers and management companies get access to huge pieces of prime real estate which they can then redevelop to bring in higher-paying tenants and gentrify the neighborhood. They also get tax breaks in the form of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, and a massive direct subsidy from Section 8 vouchers paid by the federal government. This is nothing but corporate loot and plunder, carried out at the expense of public housing residents who are expected to put up with worsening neglect in the meantime.



## THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST DISPLACEMENT

The United Front Against Displacement stands with the tenants at Sunnydale and Potrero Hill who have decided to speak out about the conditions they are being forced to live in. SFHA must immediately make arrangements to fix these issues. This must be done without giving the properties over to private companies, which residents have been organizing to oppose, and ensure that residents retain their public housing leases with SFHA.

Arrangements to address these issues include but are not limited to:

- Properly remediating mold (not by painting over it as seems to be acceptable to SFHA), lead, and other health hazards present in numerous SFHA apartments and addressing the root causes (leaky roofs and plumbing issues, for instance) of these problems.
- Thoroughly addressing pest infestations, including mice, rats, cockroaches, and bedbugs.
- Making necessary repairs within apartments as well as common areas, including but not limited to fixing broken or missing locks, doors, windows, and cabinets.
- Arranging and promptly following through on apartment transfers for tenants who are under-housed and/or living in dangerous conditions, many of whom have been waiting for years.

We demand the prompt resolution of the egregious issues documented here, as well as broader action to address the similar issues faced by the majority of SFHA residents which are threatening their health and livelihoods.

-The United Front Against Displacement.

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