



Housing Justice League Newsletter

June 2019

How Gentrification, Abortion Access, and Settler Colonialism Are Inextricably Linked

by Ebony Short

As I sat on my bed completely enthralled and engulfed in the mayhem happening around me regarding the passing of HB481, my mind wasn't on abortion access. My mind was on agency. I reflected on how the state has gone through a myriad of measures to not only attempt to impede on community residents' bodily autonomy here in Atlanta, but in places like Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Palestine and the Philippines as well. I am writing this piece to inform my audience of the ways in which the state's attacks on folks' agencies are not independent, but intrinsically linked to each other.

Let's begin this skip down the yellow brick road of facism (lol) with the Peoplestown and Mechanicsville residents. These community residents, predominantly low income black and brown folks, are being gentrified from their homes without even as much as a community benefits agreement. Some of these residents are being sued via eminent domain. This is the epitome of the state denying folks of their agency. Who is the state, along with developers, to tell these community residents, who reside in historically black communities might I add, that

they must now pay a raised mortgage/rent and if they can't then they will have to find somewhere else to stay? Who is the state to force some of these residents from their homes? This is a direct assault on these folks' agency and self determination. Something that we have seen happening to black and brown folks and especially black and brown queer and trans folks statistically more often due to white supremacy, classism, colonialism, antiblackness, transmisogynoir and queerphobia. These community residents don't have a choice but to pay their raised rent/mortgage of their homes because if not they risk being homeless. Now let me break this down even further and talk about how gentrification in south Atlanta is also an issue that HB481 opposers should be fighting against.

HB481 is a bill signed by governor Kemp not too long ago that states that a person with a uterus cannot obtain an abortion after they have become 6 weeks pregnant. Yes honey, it is literally an abortion ban. This is a blatant denial of agency because who is the state to tell me what to do with my body? But, let's also get to the Georgia economy and how HB481's supporters,



though they claim to be staunchly “pro-life” *insert heavy scoff and eye roll here*, have a disregard for black and brown low income folks lives as HB481 has been proven to worsen the Georgia economy. The film industry is booming in Georgia and with the passing of this bill film companies are less likely to set up shop and create content because of how draconian this anti-choice bill is. The film industry literally contributes approximately 9.5 billion dollars to Georgia’s economy. With an even worse economy, guess who gets hit the worst? You guessed it, low income black and brown people. Because trash economy=income decreases WHICH THEN EQUALS more folks being unable to pay their rent/mortgages because of gentrification WHICH THEN EQUALS more black and brown folks being added to the homeless population. And of course for folks who want to obtain an abortion that are residing in Georgia, this means that that person will have to travel far and wide to get one legally. Low income folks don’t have that luxury. Do you see the bricks coming together and forming the path towards fascism now? And I’m not done.

Let’s think global for a second. For places like Palestine and Puerto Rico , those who are opposed to HB481 and gentrification must also be against the settler colonialism taking place abroad. Palestinians are being ethnically cleansed because they are Palestinian and living on land that was literally theirs first. The u.s is complicit in the murder of this demographic of people because the u.s will have/has easier access to Palestine’s oil and gas wealth. Puerto Ricans are

suffering from poverty because the u.s cares more about making money than creating safe living environments for the people who live there. Both of these instances boil down to agency and self determination again. Who is the united states to tell these two whole ass autonomous places what they can and can’t do as well as create a system of life for these demographics that aids in their literal deaths? I wonder if the pro-lifers care about this, but I digress.

In conclusion, this conversation that we are having about the residents of Peoplestown and Mechanicsville in regards to gentrification is inextricably linked to the fight to #FreePalestine and #FreePuertoRico and to #SayNoToAbortionBans . All of them are quite different, but boil down to one’s ability to make decisions about their bodies and lives. And who are you, dear reader, to sit quietly while others are being disenfranchised?

¹See: The Treaty of Paris

²See: The Treaty of Paris

³I mention Puerto Rico because it is occupied land just like the rest of “america,” but I wanted to highlight it because I feel it isn’t known by a lot of people how horrible the united states is towards Puerto Ricans. Ninety percent of the industry in Puerto Rico is owned by the united states and companies have no regard for Puerto Rican life as they pollute the air and offer tax- free profits to united states corporations.

⁴I concluded with this because we all have a certain proximity to power. I want to hold my readers accountable for using whatever that proximity is, to help someone who has a further proximity to power.



NEWS UPDATES

Housing Justice League is Looking for Feedback on Our Bylaws Draft!

The Board of HJL has recently finished a draft of our new bylaws and we are looking for feedback from HJL Membership. This feedback and engagement of HJL membership is crucial for the Bylaws to serve as a tool to make HJL a more democratic and transparent organization. We are currently holding meetings with every tenant association that is a Member of HJL to discuss the purpose of the Bylaws and get feedback.

You can read the bylaws in their entirety and submit a feedback form by going to www.housingjusticeleague.org/bylaws. Please submit your feedback by June 30th. After incorporating feedback, we will hold a vote for ratification by the Membership. Not a member? Register now at www.housingjusticeleague.org/hjl-membership.

Voting will be open from July 8 to July 23. Voting will be available to all registered members of HJL online and in-person at the July mass meeting. We will also provide tenant associations with information and come out to tenant association meetings to help with voting.

We hope that the Bylaws will improve communication within the organization, and make paths to participation and leadership clearer. Questions? Email us at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com.

Updates on Eviction Defense Work by Natalie McLaughlin

<https://www.gofundme.com/make-hjl039s-new-eviction-defense-program-possible>

On Tuesday June 4 HJL held a training and orientation to our new Eviction Defense Work at the Vine City Civic Association. Huge thank you to the Vine City Civic Association for opening their space to us in the community where we will begin our eviction defense outreach. The training was filled with people and good energy. HJL volunteers signed up for different tasks and roles that will be crucial for the work moving forward such as being part of a Infoline/voicemail response team, delivering manuals, helping with information sessions, canvassing, and legal and policy research. We encourage anyone looking to get more deeply involved in this work to join our weekly Eviction Defense conference calls. Email us at housingjusticeleague@gmail.com to join our Eviction Defense Slack channel and get information about those calls. We anticipate printing and online publication of the manual by the end of the month.

SEEKING VENUE LOCATIONS!

We are seeking new spaces throughout Atlanta to hold mass meetings, tenant trainings, and other events. Spaces would preferably be wheelchair accessible, fit 30 people, have wall space to project, have free parking, be owned/managed by groups who support HJL's mission, and be free for the our organization to use. Have any leads?

Email us at housingjusticeleague@gmail.com



Housing Justice League
housingjusticeleague.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Check www.housingjusticeleague.org/events to confirm time, location, and event details!
For all events, please email us at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com if you need childcare.

Saturday June 22nd 10-12:30pm - *Canvassing in Chosewood Park* - Meeting at the parking lot where Nolan St SE ends into Chosewood Park, check the Facebook event for updates and more details. Come knock on doors with us in the Chosewood Park area and have conversations about the BeltLine for All campaign! We will be collecting signatures for our BeltLine for All petition and offering folks "House NOT For Sale" signs to let developers know that they will not be moved out of their community.

Deadline: Sunday June 30 - *Please submit any feedback you have on HJL's new bylaws!* - Read the bylaws in their entirety and submit feedback at www.housingjusticeleague.org/bylaws. After incorporating feedback, we will hold a vote for ratification by HJL's Membership. Not a member? Register now at www.housingjusticeleague.org/hjl-membership.

Every Wednesday 6:00 pm - *Eviction Defense Meeting* - Join our Slack channel to get call-in information. Email us at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com if you want to be added to HJL's Slack. See www.housingjusticeleague.org/eviction-defense for more information.

Tuesday July 16, 6:30pm - *HJL July Mass Meeting* - **1040 Crew St SW 30315**. During the meeting members will be able to vote on whether to pass HJL's new bylaws. We will discuss the current

status of all campaigns, the organization, and we will have breakouts of interest for tenant associations, eviction defense, and the BeltLine4all campaign. Orientation for newcomers at 6pm.

Deadline: Tuesday July 23 - *Last Day for Voting on Bylaws* - **Rick McDevitt Youth Center 1040 Crew St SW**. This will be the last day to vote on the bylaws! We will have voting available online starting July 8 and in-person voting at July's mass meeting.

Saturday July 13th 10-12:30pm - *Canvassing in Pittsburgh* - Meeting location to be determined, check the Facebook event for updates and more details. Come knock on doors with us in the Pittsburgh area and have conversations about the BeltLine for All campaign! We will be collecting signatures for our BeltLine for All petition and offering folks "House NOT For Sale" signs to let developers know that they will not be moved out of their community.