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Something Needs to Give

Attention to all! We are in a crisis right now. No, it is not because we are in Pandemic times. No, it is not because climate change is becoming more and more relevant. It is because, as Mr. Jimmy Mcmillan puts it, “the rent is too dam high”. Today, we are faced with a sad reality. To live in The City, it is near impossible. Housing is not affordable. It is especially out of reach for those in the lower socio-economic class. If you are in the middle class and live in The City, you are just scraping by. New York City used to be the place to make dreams happen. People from far and wide across the world would come to live in New York City and make new roots. It is those people, who came to make roots, help diversify and make New York City the city it is today. Now with the way the prices for rent, that special trait New York City has, will be gone forever. We are no longer a haven for dreams and opportunity. We are now a city, selling out its ideals, its foundation. Once a city, welcoming to all people, now a city for only a select few. A few fortunate enough to afford to make roots here. That is not what this city stands for. Since when was it a city for the rich to live in? NYC was about working class. You worked, you made it. However, even working, one, two, three jobs, does not mean you can make it and live here.

Everywhere you go now around the city, what do you see? A city that is always under construction. There are scaffoldings everywhere, we are living inside a jungle gym. With those scaffoldings come buildings, and with those buildings, they are usually high-end housing. Housing that only a few fortunate enough can afford. Promising luxuries and the prestige to be able to live inside a particular neighborhood. Tell me though, since when was it prestigious to

kick out the original group of people living in that community? There are several different reasons why housing has become unaffordable, one major reason is gentrification. Gentrification, or the moving of majority white individuals into communities that are or really, used to be predominately minority communities. With more and more white people moving into a community, the neighborhood price goes up. The average cost of rent is then targeting those new people who are moving into the communities. They usually have better paying jobs than minorities already living there. So then, minorities are slowly squeezed out of the community.

Another factor that is leading to the exodus of diversification in New York City, is wages. According to the New York City site under the NYC Housing plan “the real income of the City's renters has stagnated, rising from \$40,000 in 2005 to just \$41,000 in 2012 (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/housing/about/problem.page>). As we can see from what city officials are showing, jobs are not paying. Those of us working those tough jobs, the jobs needed to keep The City running, are not being paid properly. Everything is going up, except wages. Yet knowing this housing is keep being made for exuberant prices the original people living in the city can not afford.

We are being systemically pushed out of our homes. Squeezed out of our communities. Little by little every corner going to be filled with people who all look the same. Something must be done about it. Housing is such a big issue it transcends NYC, all across the country and around the world the same issue is happening. According to an article by Alan Crawford of Bloomberg, “Soaring property prices are forcing people all over the world to abandon all hope of owning a home (Crawford, Alan September 19,2021)”. He discusses in his article how all around the world prices for homes or even to rent out home are drastically rising. That it is going to be the new global break. It is what will break governments and divide people.

With that being said, it is evident action must be taken. We already see it is not just a city issue but a global issue. NYC has already started actions to start attacking the issue. They have created affordable housing buildings and requiring other buildings to have some units for affordable housing prices. That is a nice first step but we have to take the next step now. We have to go into the communities and educate. Educate the young so that from young they can have the drive to go and get the jobs that helps them pay current prices now with ease. We then need to start PAYING PEOPLE! For too long, people have worked hard for mere change. All the hard-working jobs are paid at such a low rate it is despicable. You ever wonder why these jobs pay so low? Look at who mostly takes those jobs, minorities. It is time for wages to become fair.

My friends, I asked you, if you are to take one thing from this today, it be to speak up. Speak up for your fair wage. Speak up when they try to push you out of your neighborhood. We must come together to stop what is happening. Our streets in every corner should be just as diversify as it was many years ago. Together, we have to protect what it means to be from New York City. Bring back the ideals and make The City more welcoming to all, and not just a few. If you can do that, many things will fall in place and other issues will be solved too. We can then be an example of what can be done around the world. So that we can all, grow up, dream, and succeed where we want to be, in any city, state, or country.