



A Right to Live

Joe Steckler, President

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Where have we heard those words? We hear a lot about children: lunch programs, a tax to fund schools, the need to pay teachers more. But how many of us really know the cost of aging? Try some research on the internet or listen to neighbors or family members who are not as well off as you might be. Think about the many that live on Social Security; a spouse dies and the widow or widower tried to eke it out on one check. And, if you think I am exaggerating, I assure you I am not.

Before 1935 we had never heard the words social security except in a dictionary and not linked together as we do today. Many thought this program would sustain them in their old age, but today we know better. Still, some people want to rely on Social Security as a primary source of income. While we do not have to fund or even help such people, not everyone who falls into this category gets there intentionally; rather it happens as a result of many factors. Let's just say it is an inevitable circumstance and plan for it. The words life and happiness hit at the heart of today's article. Recently I answered our helpline for three days. One caller was trying to find affordable housing for a friend whose income would be halved by a death – the new

income of \$1,100 would not even cover the cost of the mobile home and electricity. In another situation, the caller could no longer afford his home when the rent was raised. The third call too was for affordable housing. No one had a retirement fund, qualified for veteran's benefits, or had any other source readily available.

It is difficult to live or be happy if one cannot afford the cost of existence, and that is exactly what I am referring to in today's article. Affordable housing is a topic that needs more than just discussion. Our local planning boards, Commissioners, and county and city governments should be seeking solutions and funding to solve this issue. It is way beyond the talking stage and well into the action stage, but little is being done to truly fix the problem.

The Advocacy Council of Helping Seniors will make affordable housing an important action item in 2018. In response to last week's column, a new volunteer signed up. She told me that she was unaware of so many needs in our community and wanted to be involved. I thanked her for her willingness to help, as I will any citizen who wants to become a member of our proactive citizen action group.

The problem of affordable housing will continue to grow until it is resolved through leadership from citizens who truly care for and believe in the words life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Call Kay, our Information Specialist, at 321-473-7770 to join the Helping Seniors Advocacy Council. We need you.

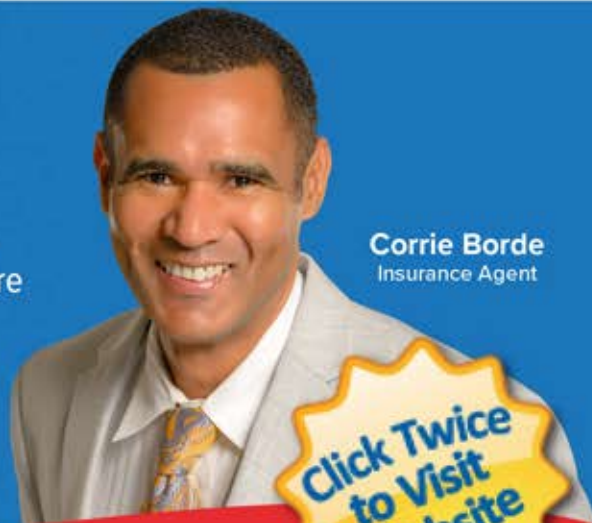
Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a non profit organization designed to advocate, educate, and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens. Feel free to contact us at: info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or calling: 321-473-7770. **SS**

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