



Affordable Housing, Part IV

By Joe Steckler, *President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County*

A very real problem in addressing affordable housing is that those trying to help do not understand the needs we are trying to meet. I have read articles discussing the need ranging from 4-bedroom homes with a 2-car garage, to multiple 1-bedroom apartment units with separate baths and a common kitchen. Action that has been taken to build affordable housing shows that legislators and local politicians do not know what constitutes affordable housing.

Having managed a senior retirement community, I can tell you that housing needs of seniors are quite different from those of young families. So the first step is to define the age group you are assisting. For those over age 65, you could design a multi floor complex of 1- and 2-bedroom housing units with a great room, small kitchen, and common dining facility.

Not only do we need to define the type of housing, we need to know how we will pay for it. I have mentioned the Sadowski Fund, which was legislated into law to help provide funds for affordable housing. Since its inception, over \$3.2 BILLION has been raided from the fund by legislative action to pay for General Revenue projects – a violation of the purpose for which the fund was established.

Consider what those funds could have accomplished had they been combined with private investor money to build the rental type housing now needed. We can not encourage elders and others to come to Florida if we can not provide affordable housing. Toss into the equation a need to accommodate the homeless, which often include families with no place to live.

At the conclusion of the 2021 legislative session, Florida legislators agreed to stop their raiding and let approximately \$338 million remain in the Sadowski Fund. I have a copy of the Council of Catholic Bishops of Florida report that supports such action. Then, in the last week of the current legislative session, a group of legislators stole \$100 million from the Sadowski Fund to support a Hometown Heroes program (SB788) that does not exist, having died in Committee. Where is this money now? Did you see any reports on such legislation? You will if you go to <https://share.newsbreak.com/tf2prlyx> and read about what I have stated here.

There are several schools of thought on how to build

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