

Free argumentative essay on housing in new orleans

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According to the U. S constitution, every citizen has a right to proper housing and a decent living. This is supposed to mean that no citizen in the country should be subjected to living conditions that degrade the value of human rights. However, there are arguments time and again that the rights of some people are violated where they are supposed to get the right but they never do. This happens in the case of New Orleans where the people often feel that they are not actually treated as citizens of the larger American community. Whether there are emergencies or not, the area, which is largely made up of Africa Americans, often receive harsh treatment. For instance, after the Hurricane Katrina, it would have been expected that they would receive immediate help, as is common with the other American regions. However, interviews from the survivors indicate that they actually suffered at the hands of the officers who were supposed to accord them some help. This made them feel so not America, they were blacks, and blacks were no equal to the whites. The issues of racism seemed to take over (Penner, 5).

With this insight, it is proper to look at the housing condition for the people. As Penner puts it, most of the people lost their houses to the Katrina, and they were once again rendered homeless. As such, it was the responsibility of the government to ensure that these people were resettled. However, the displacement of the people was slow and very discriminative (10). This brings about the issue of housing in the region. This paper looks at the status of public housing before the Katrina and after the Katrina.

Before the storm, there were a lot of people living within New Orleans (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, 1). These people would often

commute from their places of residence to their work stations. It so happened that New Orleans was known for its neighborhoods, such as the French Quarter, Ninth Ward and the Garden District. Most of the people living in the area were African Americans, though there were patches of whites in the area (Luft and Griffin, 1). However, the residential areas were divided into the whites' occupancy and the Blacks occupancy. Most of the black population, who were immigrants, lived in the quarters that were designed for the poor. The facilities were not as classy, and this brought about the discrimination of the people depending on where they resided within New Orleans. As Luft and Griffith observed, it would have been easier in New Orleans for one to be asked where he lives before being asked what he did for a living. In other words, the living standards were quite different for the two groups that lived in the area, with the whites living quite comfortable lives while the blacks were relegated to poor living conditions. As such, it can be said that before the Katrina, there was enough housing for the people of New Orleans, but the housing was greatly affected by racial discrimination, where the whites had the best while the blacks had to make do with what they had.

After the hurricane, matters just got worse in the region. The storm virtually destroyed almost all the residential places that were in its way. The losses suffered by the two groups of people was quite different. As Fussell, Sastry and VanLandingham put it, the Africans used to reside in the areas that were prone to floods. As such, they suffered the greatest losses as their houses, which in the first place were not as reinforced as those of the whites, were

actually totally destroyed by the floods (2). It is no wonder that during the resettlement after the storm, the rate of return of the African Americans was very slow as compared to that of the whites. The blacks simply did not have a place to go back to, they did not know where to start and even if they did, their economic statuses could not allow them to get back to their former living standards. To make matters worse, the displacement efforts by the government were done in a very crude manner, where the authorities practiced some discrimination. The white received immediate attention whereas the blacks had to wait to be attended to (Penner, 6).

The white Americans, however, have gone back to their residence at a much quicker pace. This is mainly because, as mentioned above, their houses were relatively secure as compared to those of the Africans. They could easily go back and continue with their lives.

The issue of public housing cannot be discussed without having the mention of the Department Housing and Urban Development (UHD). The housing department controlled the extent to which the people got back into New Orleans after the storm, dictating who could and who could not go back (Luft and Griffith, 3). It is not surprising that the white Americans got the green flag much faster as compared to the blacks, mainly because their homes were not as badly affected as those of the blacks. This indicates that there is a possibility that most of the New Orleans former population will continue relying on makeshift residences or supported residences as they await their fate as far as housing is concerned. If the HUD cannot come out with a plan

to save them, there is a possibility that the population might continue suffering for quite a long time, yet they have a right to proper housing.

It is quite unfortunate that even after the Katrina, the same divisions seem to be settling in again. The whites are getting back at a higher rate, their houses getting renovated faster while those of the blacks are written off or repaired in a very slow rate. Unless the situation is checked, then the region is bound to be hit by a housing shortage, a crisis that could be worse than the situation was before. There was enough housing for the people before the hurricane, even if there was some disparities. The HUD should streamline the resettling process so that there is no more discrimination and everyone is housed adequately.

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