

# News Coverage Exposes Growing Squatter Crisis in Washington, D.C.

*SMOA Submits Emergency CLEAR Act to Mayor and Council, Warns: "It's a Miracle No One Has Died"*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Recent reporting by 7News / On Your Side has brought national attention to what property owners and neighbors

“

This is not an isolated incident. There are dozens of property owners dealing with this right now. It is a miracle no one has died.”

*Dean Hunter, CEO, Small Multifamily Owners Association*

across the District have been warning about for years: unauthorized occupancy and squatting has become a serious and escalating public-safety crisis.

While recent coverage focused on an alleged squatter occupying a Northeast D.C. home, the Small Multifamily & Rental Owners Association (SMOA) says the situation is far broader and far more dangerous than a single case.

According to SMOA, dozens of property owners across the District are dealing with unauthorized occupants who

simply refuse to leave and the police will not remove them, citing overly broad landlord-tenant laws, exposing properties and other tenants to dangerous conditions.

In response, SMOA has drafted emergency legislation — the Clarifying Law Enforcement Against Residential Trespass Act of 2026 (CLEAR Act) — and has formally transmitted the bill to Mayor Muriel Bowser and every Member of the D.C. Council, requesting immediate emergency passage.

“This is not an isolated incident — it’s a citywide problem that’s been allowed to grow in the shadows,” said SMOA CEO Dean Hunter.

“There are dozens of property owners dealing with this right now, quietly and without news cameras outside their property. It is a miracle no one has died.”

SMOA thanked 7News and the ‘On Your Side’ team, including D.C. Bureau Reporter Phylicia Ashley, for their sustained reporting and for elevating the issue to the public and District leadership.

“We want to thank Channel 7 and the ‘On Your Side’ reporters for pushing this into the open,” Hunter said. “This coverage elevated a problem that has been putting lives at risk and forced

real questions at the Council.”

## A Public Safety Emergency — Not a Housing Debate

According to SMOA, unauthorized occupancy cases frequently involve fire hazards, illegal electrical hookups, blocked exits, overcrowding, and confrontations, placing neighbors, first responders, and law enforcement officers at risk.

“Homes are being occupied without permission, without inspections, and without safety oversight,” Hunter said.

“That’s not a housing dispute. That’s a public safety emergency — block by block.”

The Northeast D.C. case highlighted by recent coverage ultimately ended with a judge ruling that the occupant did not have tenant rights, allowing the homeowner to regain possession. SMOA says no one should have to rely on months of litigation or national media attention to reach that outcome.

“The CLEAR Act doesn’t weaken tenant rights — it restores clarity,” Hunter said.

“It tells police officers and judges exactly when they can act and exactly when they must not.”

## CLEAR Act: Drafted, Delivered, and Ready

The CLEAR Act, drafted by SMOA and transmitted to the Mayor and Council, is narrowly tailored to address enforcement confusion while preserving all lawful tenant protections. The legislation would:

- Give police and courts clear standards to distinguish lawful tenants from unauthorized occupants
- Clarify when unlawful possession constitutes residential trespass
- Enable swift court and law-enforcement action under Title 16 when no lawful tenancy exists

## Call to Action

“We’ve drafted the bill. We’ve transmitted it. The problem is documented,” Hunter said. “Now the Council and the Mayor need to pass the CLEAR Act on an emergency basis — before this crisis turns deadly.”

A copy of the CLEAR Act is available upon request.

## About SMOA

The Small Multifamily & Rental Owners Association (SMOA) represents small and independent residential property owners across Washington, D.C., including owners of single-family homes and small multifamily buildings.

Dean Hunter  
Small Multifamily Owners Association  
+1 202-660-1333  
[email us here](#)  
Visit us on social media:  
[Other](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/875404638>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.