

SUN MESSENGER

2010

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OPINION

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Tune out 'bad actors'

We understand the reasoning of those who are against allowing South Euclid to inspect abandoned homes. There is a fear that people's civil liberties will be violated because a governmental inspection is interfering with the sale of their homes.

That may be true, but is the alternative of letting abandoned houses litter the city and bringing down everyone's home values worth salvaging civil liberties and forgoing a program that will ultimately do more good than harm? We don't think so.

South Euclid, like most inner-ring suburbs, is facing a real crisis as people are walking away from bad mortgages and abandoning their homes. The city realizes this is creating more problems than bringing down the appearance of the neighborhood. Abandoned homes are inviting targets for "bad actors," the term used to describe people who make cheap and quick repairs on these homes without obtaining a city permit, then turn around and make a profit on the house, selling it for less than it is worth, but more than what they paid for it.

Because South Euclid cannot go in and inspect these vacated homes, the "bad actors" have swooped in and made their mark. This is not happening nearly as much in Shaker Heights

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and Cleveland Heights, larger inner-ring cities that are also experiencing a rash of abandoned homes. Why? Because they have point-of-sale inspections.

How would an opponent of the proposed inspection law like it if he or she bought an abandoned home on the premise that necessary repairs were made, only to find those repairs were shoddy and not up to code? That person probably would feel violated and victimized, exactly how the city feels as it can do little to stop the infiltration of "bad actors."

Opponents raise a valid point in that the proposed legislation is too vague and could allow the city to conduct an inspection on a home the occupants vacate during the winter months to head to warmer climates. That wording needs to be tightened. Besides that, there is little reason to oppose South Euclid's efforts in tuning out "bad actors." No one wants to watch a movie in which the acting is horrendous, so why should South Euclid residents have to continue enduring the nightmare of "bad actors" further ruining the city's housing stock and causing their home values to plummet?