



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2013

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DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE!

If ever the words of the Declaration of Independence authored by Thomas Jefferson were screaming out loud today in the state of Michigan – and more specifically in the city of Detroit – it is now! In case you have forgotten, let me remind you what the framers of our Constitution and ultimately these United States declared to the world:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

The key phrase here is “consent of the governed”!

The Governor of the state of Michigan has imposed upon the citizens of Detroit what amounts to be one man with the power to dictate their very future and quality of life in this city. Mr. Governor, you did it! And now you must own it!

Mr. Kevyn Orr has credentials that any mother or father would be most proud to claim for their own. It is not the man, it is the plan and the process by which he has arrived in town. Lest we forget - 2.3 million Michiganders by a margin of 52% - voted to repeal Public Act 4!

The Governor of the state and certain members of the state legislature went against the consent of the people, changing the law to suit their own purposes and to enshrine a repeal-proof law in which the people would have no say. Yet the people will always have their say!

For those who say that democracy and the right to vote is not a factor in this equation: You are totally wrong! Read your constitution! Remember how we got here in the first place! Many folks stayed home and did not vote from around the state. Many voted against their own interests leading to policies which are choking the quality of life out of their communities today.

One cannot reduce the value of the right to vote today and then expect to motivate the people on the value of their vote tomorrow! Mr. Orr knows that voting matters because he worked with the Obama campaign during the last election on the issue of voter protection. How can he now ignore the fact that the city of Detroit – under his tenure – may very well become the nation’s “olympics” of voter suppression. City services such as public lighting, police, fire, water, education, economic access are all vital to our community. They are obtained and provided in many cases by the public policies of those whom we elect to office. Our right to elect public officials to represent our community should not be traded on the bargaining table of economic distress. For many, this is a new poll tax. One can simply make the argument that based upon your inability to pay your bills, you should – in fact – lose your right to engage in the electoral privileges of our nation.

Where will this slippery slope end? Will some legislature introduce a bill that suggests that since some municipality is under financial distress that they should no longer be able to participate in national elections? Are we headed down the road to suggest that due to economic distress, you are not entitled to the educational benefits, national healthcare or the guarantees of the Constitution of the United States?

Emergency managers perform 3 particular functions: Cut, Slash and Sell! Our city cannot cut its way into the future or slash its way into stability or wind up selling every asset that it has to stimulate growth in the economy. What in Detroit will you sell to the highest bidder? Will the time for the Emergency Manager be extended for 18 months at a time because the Governor does not like the plan of the City Council when submitted, thus eliminating the Emergency Manager?

Mr. Orr represents Wells Fargo – one of the nation's largest banks engaged in foreclosures in the United States. At least 7,800 foreclosures are occurring right now on Wayne County's new list. Mr. Orr represents the Amway Corporation – in which Richard DeVos, a founder – was a lead voice in implementing the right to work effort which is now law in the state of Michigan. Coming from the Jones Day law firm with at least 828 partners and 2400 attorneys throughout the United States, Europe and Asia – they are among the world's most prominent firms.

Yet on the issue of diversity in the state of California, their firm was given an F for diversity by the Greenlining Institute for having one black partner in the state. In their Washington, DC office – a city with a majority of African American residents - where 239 attorneys practice, they only have 4 African American partners and 2 African American associates.

In the city of Chicago, with a major African American population – out of 179 attorneys, they have one black partner and one black associate. It is important to remember when coming to a city like Detroit with a majority African American population that diversity does matter and that input from the community is essential.

As we travel down this road of emergency manager, we must remember that the Chrysler Corporation – which Mr. Orr helped to restructure - had 2 ½ financial bailouts going back to Lee Iaccoca and President Jimmy Carter. The second beginning with President George W. Bush on his way out and being enhanced by President Barack Obama during his first term in office - providing billions of dollars in aid to the corporation. No, we do not regret or resent the auto companies for any loans or aid they received. We support the US auto industry – just as they were instrumental in supporting our nation during a time of war where Detroit was known as the arsenal of democracy. Mr. Orr also was a key factor in the restructuring of the banking industry leading to 1.7 trillion dollars in bailout monies (TARP) supposedly to be invested in financially distressed communities which has not yet found its way into cities like Detroit.

If Detroit is truly “the olympics of restructuring,” according to Mr. Orr then where is the bailout money for this city? Anyone who attempts to restructure Detroit must also engage in some restructuring of the banks, the job providers, the state legislature and the Wall Street bond investors. Where is the new revenue? Where are the new jobs? 18 months is not long enough to erase a 50-100 year problem. The issues that confront us must not result in the creation of 2 Detroits; a Detroit for those who have and another Detroit for those who have not. Our security lies in citizens being prioritized, their voices being heard, and their quality of life being budgetarily made the number one issue. Mr. Orr appears to be a nice gentleman. But this is not about a nice, efficient, articulate and U of M Wolverine named Kevyn Orr.

Everyone must be at the table! Everyone – particularly the citizens of Detroit who have never left this city – must be included! The people have a right to protest, declare unfair and challenge this imposed dictatorship on the city of Detroit. Remembering the words of Marvin Gaye where many Detroiters have simply caught the Inner City Blues which “*which makes you wanna holler and throw up both of your hands.*”

Let us be clear: The individual whose hands are directly tied to the future of our city is the Governor of the State Rick Snyder. Mr. Orr may be out front, but behind the scenes calling the tune is our dear friend “The Nerd” - Governor Snyder!

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Detroit Branch . . . NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE



Detroit Does Not Need An Emergency Manager

May 21, 2012

By: Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

The recent call from some for the City of Detroit to relinquish its duly elected leadership and constitutional authority to an Emergency Manager is an attack upon the essence of our democracy. Detroit, as many other communities has a significant financial crisis. Less we forget the United States of America has a \$14 trillion dollar economic crisis with a totally dysfunctional Congress. No one is calling for an Emergency Manager for the United States of America. The State of Michigan over the last few years has faced over a billion dollar crisis. No one has called for an Emergency Manager for the State of Michigan. Wayne County has a financial deficit. No one has called for a financial manager for Wayne County.

It appears that these calls are rooted in the frustration of “it’s no use, they can’t fix it” and the leadership in Detroit, unlike other communities, is somehow deficient in their political and financial ability to deal with this crisis. I disagree. For those who love to quote one of America’s early heroes, Thomas Jefferson, let me quote him now, “those who surrender freedom for security will not have, nor do they deserve either one.” Now is not the time to surrender, abdicate or step back from the responsibility to make necessary political and fiscal decisions.

An Emergency Manager sends our community down the slippery slope of selective empowerment, an end to the rights of voters to elect their leaders and government not according to the Constitution, but according to the politics of the one who may be in the Governor’s chair. This is not an attack upon the Governor; it is an attack upon this process. We in Detroit, Benton Harbor, Flint, (all communities of color), did not elect an Emergency Manager. Are there no other cities in financial distress? The leaders currently in office were elected by the people. The people have the right to elect good or not so good persons to public office even though we prefer the best persons possible. We have known such leaders from the White House to the State House and to the mansions of city government. Yet we have not circumvented the Constitution. It is ironic that many of the people, who are calling for government to do less on a national level for the people, are calling on government to do more in the City of Detroit to the people.

It is important that everyone comes to the table to address these issues. Those quick to say that the writer of this editorial simply wants to give Detroit a pass and look the other way, you are totally wrong. This is not only for the City of Detroit but for every other community in our State that faces this issue. Our elected officials from the Mayor, to the Council as well as labor, business, religious and community must change the paradigm. Too many folks keep talking about “shared sacrifice.” One can only sacrifice and cut so much. It is also time to talk about “shared prosperity.” Cuts have been made and new cuts

may have to be made. Have we looked at constructive alternatives? An Emergency Manager does not have to be inevitable. The only thing inevitable in life are death and taxes. Before we deliver the eulogy

for Detroit, let's look at some alternatives regarding the generation of revenue for Detroit. In 1977 Coleman A. Young called for a "Say Yes to Detroit" campaign which was a small tax to prevent the laying off of 600 police officers and fire fighters raising \$96 million. This occurred in the middle of a major recession. Those who care about our city still need to "Say Yes To Detroit", just as we witnessed the Mayor and other city leaders do recently. Detroiters we are not the enemy, the enemy is the process and the economic conditions which have brought us to this point.

The State should return to the City of Detroit the money that is owed for the revenue sharing we no longer receive and the financial commitment that was made years ago of nearly \$220 million dollars. Maybe in 2012 a small tax with a sunrise and a sunset could help offset more city-wide layoffs and end the deficit. Some have suggested that Detroit should bottle its own water to sell. Why not call it the "Big D" for Delicious?

This may hurt some of us, but perhaps it is time to attach a small fee to visit Belle Isle. Increase cooperation among various communities to purchase and secure common services and products. No I am not suggesting regional control of the City of Detroit, but as the new Charter suggests regional cooperation. Corporations and businesses should reduce their costs for services and products at a percentage that is fair and appropriate depending on size of contract and company to the City. Step up now and be rewarded later. This is not a permanent situation but should also have a sunrise and a sunset. Utilize the international port of the City of Detroit to engage in trade and new business from a global perspective. Adjust City personnel to reflect cities of comparable size and create training programs for new job development. Work with the federal government through the Department of Labor to expand Learn and Earn Programs. Let us put Detroit on line to sell Detroit specific products and services. We must think outside the box to bring alternatives inside the box. No, now is not the time to surrender to an Emergency Manager. Now is the time to manage our own affairs.

To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "the ultimate measure of a city is not where it stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where it stands at times of challenge and controversy." We have been here before. We've done it once and we can do it again. **Let's Say Yes To Detroit!**

DETROIT TAKEOVER HOLDS LESSONS FOR OTHER CITIES IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Written by Rev. Wendell Anthony
Friday, 22 March 2013



The governor of Michigan has imposed upon the citizens of Detroit what amounts to be one man with the power to dictate their very future and quality of life in this city. Mr. Governor, you did it. And now you must own it.

That man is Mr. Kevyn Orr and he has credentials that any mother or father would be most proud to claim for their own. It is not the man, it is the plan and the process by which he has arrived in town. Lest we forget, 2.3 million Michiganders, by a margin of 52 percent, voted to repeal Public Act 4, the law authorizing appointment of an emergency manager with sweeping powers over the city.

Yet, the governor and certain members of the Legislature went against the choice of the people, changing the law to suit their own purposes and to enshrine a repeal-proof law in which the people would have no say. But the people will always have their say.

For those who say that democracy and the right to vote is not a factor in this equation, you are totally wrong. Read your Constitution. Remember how we got here in the first place. Many folks stayed home and did not vote around the state. Many voted against their own interests, leading to policies which are choking the quality of life out of their communities today.

Right to vote

One cannot reduce the value of the right to vote today and then expect to motivate the people on the value of their vote tomorrow. Orr knows that voting matters because he worked with the Obama campaign during the last election on the issue of voter protection. How can he now ignore the fact that the city of Detroit, under his tenure, may very well become the nation's "Olympics" of voter suppression?

City services such as public lighting, police, fire, water, education and economic access are all vital to our community. They are obtained and provided in many cases by the public

policies of those we elect to office. Our right to elect public officials to represent our community should not be traded on the bargaining table of economic distress. For many, this is a new poll tax. One can simply make the argument that, based upon your inability to pay your bills, you should, in fact, lose your right to engage in the electoral privileges of our nation.

Where will this slippery slope end? Will some Legislature introduce a bill that suggests that since some municipality is under financial distress they should no longer be able to participate in national elections? Are we headed down the road to suggest that, due to economic distress, you are not entitled to educational benefits, national healthcare or the guarantees of the Constitution of the United States?

Highest bidder

Emergency managers perform three particular functions: cut, slash and sell. Our city cannot cut its way into the future or slash its way into stability or wind up selling every asset that it has to stimulate growth in the economy. What in Detroit will you sell to the highest bidder? Will the time for the emergency manager be extended for 18 months at a time because the governor does not like the plan of the City Council when submitted, thus eliminating the emergency manager?

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Coming from the Jones Day law firm, with at least 828 partners and 2,400 attorneys throughout the United States, Europe and Asia, they are among the world's most prominent firms.

Yet, on the issue of diversity in California, their firm was given an "F" by the Greenlining Institute for having one black partner in the state. In their office in Washington, D.C., a city with a majority of African-American residents, where 239 attorneys practice, they have only four African-American partners and two African-American associates. In Chicago, with a major African-American population, out of 179 attorneys, they have one black partner and one black associate.

Community

It is important to remember when coming to a city like Detroit with a majority African-American population, diversity does matter and input from the community is essential.

As we travel down this road of emergency manager, we must remember that the Chrysler Corporation, which Orr helped to restructure, had two and a half financial bailouts going back to Lee Iacocca and President Jimmy Carter.

The second began with President George W. Bush on his way out and that was enhanced by President Barack Obama during his first term in office, providing billions of dollars in aid to the corporation.

No, we do not regret or resent the auto companies for any loans or aid they received. We support the U.S. auto industry, just as they were instrumental in supporting our nation during a time of war when Detroit was known as the arsenal of democracy.

Orr also was a key factor in the restructuring of the banking industry, leading to \$1.7 trillion in bailout money supposedly to be invested in financially distressed communities — and which has not yet found its way into cities like Detroit.

If Detroit is truly “the Olympics of restructuring,” according to Orr, then where is the bailout money for this city?

Anyone who attempts to restructure Detroit must also engage in some restructuring of the banks, the job providers, the Legislature and the Wall Street bond investors.

Where is the new revenue? Where are the new jobs? Eighteen months is not long enough to erase a 50- to 100-year problem.

The issues that confront us must not result in the creation of two Detroits – one for those who have and another for those who have not.

Our security lies in citizens being prioritized, their voices being heard and their quality of life being made the number one issue budget-wise.

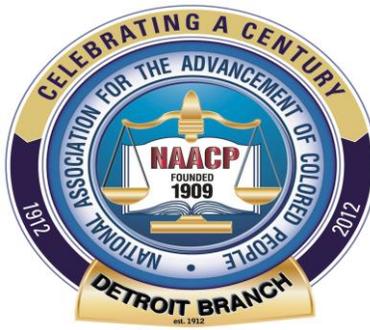
Quality of life

Everyone must be at the table. Everyone – particularly the citizens of Detroit who have never left this city – must be included. The people have a right to protest, declare unfair and challenge this imposed dictatorship on their city.

Remembering the words of Marvin Gaye, many Detroiters have simply caught the Inner City Blues, “which makes you wanna holler and throw up both of your hands.”

Let us be clear: The individual whose hands are directly tied to the future of our city is Gov. Rick Snyder. Orr may be out front but, behind the scenes calling the tune, is our dear friend “The Nerd” – Gov. Snyder.

**The Rev. Wendell Anthony is pastor of Fellowship Chapel and is serving his 10th term as president of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP.*



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2013

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Full Democracy Not Government Hypocrisy

180 Years ago in his journey across America to report on "Democracy in America", the great French writer Alexis de Tocqueville said: "there is hardly a political question in the United States that does not sooner or later turn into a judicial one." Today we face a major judicial question in the history of our democratic republic. This question is rooted in whether or not every citizen of Michigan will be treated fairly, judged equally and allowed the political representation constitutionally guaranteed. We are here today because we in the City of Detroit, along with 2.3 million Michigan voters still say no to the imposition, the forced acceptance, and the unfair application of one man given the authority to decide the fate of hundreds of thousands of Michigan citizens called an Emergency Manager.

Governor Rick Snyder must be held accountable for this great tragedy which has negated Michigan and thus American democracy. His relentless non-positive action is causing a tremendous negative reaction on the part of those who live in the largest city in our state. While it is the City of Detroit today, stay tuned, it will be your city next if we do not stop this on tomorrow.

We file a lawsuit today because we believe that the imposition of an Emergency Manager on the City of Detroit, and other largely populated African American cities around this state, has a disparate impact on voters of color, has a disparate impact on the City of Detroit, is against the home charters of our city and other municipalities, and gives one individual full powers and duties that have been given to duly elected officials with the consent and the will of its citizens. Today 50.4% or half of the state's African American population is ruled by an unelected Emergency Manager.

We have, however, elected Mayors, City Council persons, County Commissioners and in some cases members of publically governed municipal boards. We further believe that the process of forcing an Emergency Manager on the people of Detroit was flawed, unfair, and was not applied in many locations that according to so-called "fiscal health scores" from 0-10 should also have the appointment of an Emergency Manager.

We question the ranking and significant meaning of "fiscal stress" as identified by the State Treasurer and its application in Detroit resulting in the appointment of an Emergency Manager; as opposed to Oakland County and its lack of appointment in the the cities of Hazel Park, with a population of 9.8% African American, Pleasant Ridge, with a population of 1.9% African American and Troy, with a population of 4.0% African

American. While Pontiac, with the population of 52.1% African American, was forced to accept the appointment of an overseer which some call an Emergency Manager. The same pattern of obvious political and economic discrimination has been used in the school districts of Detroit, Highland Park and Ecorse which also have significant African American populations. Yet Van Buren Township with a population of 12.3% African American, and Harper Woods with a population of 45.6% African American had fiscal scores of 6, the same as Pontiac, but have no Emergency Manager.

We believe that we in the City of Detroit are entitled to equal protection with equal dignity owed to each voter according to the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. We further believe that the Emergency Manager appointment by Governor Rick Snyder, who is the real Emergency Manager, does not weigh each individual voter in each Michigan county the same. This reminds us of what occurred in the State of Florida during which the Supreme Court determined that the voting electorate, regardless of county, must be weighed and treated the same. It is clear to us one cannot value one persons vote in Detroit differently than that of another vote in the city of Grosse point, Grand Rapids, or Lansing, Michigan. Part of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment guarantees *“having once granted the right to vote on equal terms, the state may not by later arbitrary and disparate treatment value one persons vote over that of another”*. In other words we are appalled that while other counties and cities have so called poor economic stress records they still have the power to elect their own mayors and city council persons who are charged with the direction of their municipalities.

The founders of this nation and our democracy did not form America simply on the basis of economic distress. It was formed according to the purveyors of history and based on political duress rooted in the reality that the people declared “no taxation without representation”. We seem to have forgotten history, disregarded democracy, and are stepping on the rights of Michigan citizens who are entitled to decide their own political destiny.

For those who believe that we can give up a little democracy today to have a few city services tomorrow please remember that once you give it up it is most difficult to gain it back. We believe in partnerships not a dictatorship. We want to work with the State. We do not want the State to work against us. This is not personally against Kevin Orr. This is against a flawed, unconstitutional and tyrannical process. The State of Michigan ought to be ashamed of itself. This is not worthy of our democracy. This is not worthy of Michigan. This is not what America fights for in trying to establish new democracies all over the world.

We call upon the Court to remember our Constitution and call those who are denying democracy to all of its citizens to stand down. Implore them to work with the people and not to deny or discriminate against the people. There are alternatives to this process. There are ways to generate revenues that have never been discussed for our City. There are models on how to aide cities in financial distress that have been ignored by the governor of this state and members of the State Legislature. You cannot have a Pure Michigan when you are constantly polluting the state with public policies that destroy the quality of life rather than enhance the quality of our living.

Henry David Thoreau once said, “it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.” We call upon the Court to help the state use more wisdom and not to continue to do desperate things!

END



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July 3, 2012

OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

Gov. Snyder Vetoes Voter Suppression Bills

Today marks a significant step in the right direction to protect democracy from those who would attempt to shut the door in its face. The Detroit Branch NAACP has been very critical of many of the policies of Governor Rick Snyder as it relates to citizen representation and voter participation throughout this state. While we fervently disagree with his policies on the issue of emergency manager laws, consent agreements imposed upon cities and municipalities and what we believe to be diminishing the right to elect our own political leaders – we applaud the Governor’s stand today.

When the Governor of the state, in our view, is wrong – he should be called out. When the governor of our state is right, in our view, he should also be called out. Today, we agree with the Governor as he said, “The bills would have created voter confusion among absentee voters.” Further, it is our position that these ill-conceived bills would have led to a reduction in the access to the polls of minorities, students and seniors - increasing voter apathy among the poor. Now is not the time to create hurdles to the polls. Now is the time to build bridges to get to the polls.

We have always felt that these bills created just prior to a national election and in a so-called swing state (Michigan) that could possibly determine the result of the presidential election, were most inappropriate. The NAACP and many other organizations have a long history of voter mobilization and training in the area of voter education. We have never believed that it was necessary to create an assault on the right of the voter. We are glad that this assault has, at this time, been stopped in its tracks by the pen of the Governor.

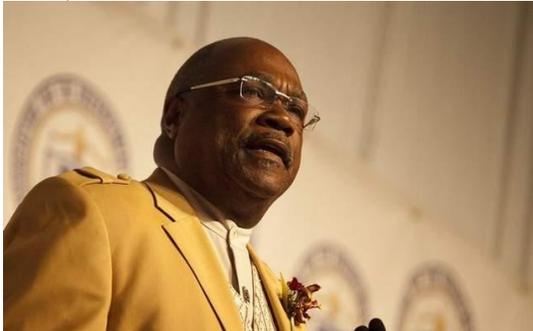
For those who are surprised at this decision, we certainly understand why this might be the case. Let the record reflect, in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Society is always taken by surprise at any new example of common sense.”

Thank you, Mr. Governor, for demonstrating some common sense. We hope that it might find a contagious community in which to flourish.

END

Detroit NAACP President Rev. Wendell Anthony: Hypocrisy in the Michigan Aristocracy, Give us Art and the People be Damned!

Jun 3, 2013



Kathleen Galligan/Detroit Free Press

Detroit's Emergency Manager Kevin Orr was doing all right until he obviously, to some, "stepped outta line." Talking about a Pandora's Box being opened, here is one. If ever there was a case of political hypocrisy and blatant demagoguery, it is in the State of Michigan by those who originally cheered for and legislated into action Michigan's new misguided Emergency Manager Law.

As cries of, "how dare you even consider selling our art" are loudly heard throughout the state, with threats of no new art for Detroit in the air, it's now on and popping. The behavior, and verbal (dare I say it protests), of many ought to at least be consistent with those who have declared the unfairness of this process from day one.

The great French writer of "Democracy in America," Alexis de Tocqueville must be leaping in his grave. As he said years ago, "The surface of American society is covered with a layer of democratic paint but from time to time one can see the old aristocratic colors breaking through."

Everyone heard Kevin Orr and Governor Rick Snyder (the real Emergency Manager) both declare that everything was on the table in order to bring the City of Detroit back to financial stability. No they didn't just say cutting workers' salaries, health care, pension benefits, police and fire, or selling Belle Isle and the Water Department. In my neighborhood "everythang means everythang."

Randy Richardville, Republican leader from Monroe, the great champion of Emergency Managers, who pushed hard for an Emergency Manager for the city of Detroit and helped to craft the Emergency Manager Law, now has a major problem. His problem lies in the fact that the Emergency Manager has said that everything must be on the table. Even Picasso, Renoir, Van Gogh, Rembrandt and all the other fellas and ladies on the walls of the DIA. Mr. Richardville has now introduced an amendment requiring art museums to follow the standards of public trusts governing museums such as the DIA. This was done faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than 2.3 million Michiganders who said no, and he was able to leap over democracy in a single night.

Richardville even said at the recent Mackinaw Conference, "We can't let somebody take our best stuff away."

Lord have mercy! As the saying goes, everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die—hmmm. It's all right to take the Water Department. It's all right to take Belle Isle. It's all right to take our voting rights. It's all right to damn the people but at the same time long live Picasso! I like good art just like everyone else. As a matter of fact, I supported the recent millage along with the members of my church and the people throughout Wayne County. We believe in protecting the jewels of Detroit. Yet we also believe in protecting the rights of the people, preserving families, creating jobs and ensuring our right to vote for our own elected officials.

I'm told that the high talk at Mackinaw Island wasn't on the subject of who would be the next Mayor of the City of Detroit or the educational achievements of the students in the Detroit Public School System, rather it was on keep your hands off of our art. This does not sound very much like shared sacrifice to me. It does not sound like everyone is at the same table to me. Why must the pain and the sacrifice always be made by the poor and those not wealthy enough to impact and influence those political leaders who have the authority to make laws governing their lives? Many of the same people who were high-fiving when Kevin Orr was brought into Detroit by the Governor and Andy Dillon are now turning a thumbs down on his work. This has a potential to create one of the most visible and wide spread divisions within our community. It is a visible indication of those who are not concerned about the creation of two communities. Those communities are one of the haves and the have-nots. Many will say that they are already here.

At this kind of political chicanery and hypocrisy, selectivity does nothing but widen the breach of race, class, and culture. It is an example of an arbitrariness and capriciousness of intent on the part of those who put art over people, material things over spiritual values, and culture over civility. This does not mean that I do not support the arts. My home and my church are both filled with representations of cultures and art from more than one source. But I am not willing to declare that in a war of economic survival, art on the wall and animals in the zoo must be preserved. Certainly not at the expense of the Water Department and the iconic family area of relaxation and celebration known as Belle Isle. Surely Michigan can do better than this. This is why we must look to real alternatives to stabilize our economy, bring in new revenue, and to draw in new citizens to our city.

As the cloud of bankruptcy hangs over the head of the City of Detroit, let us realize that every time we announce these kinds of measures, people who would contribute to Michigan pull back. When an Emergency Manager was first appointed for the City the word was who would want to invest in the City of Detroit now? Well guess what? As the potential for the selling of art in the DIA was announced, the word is who would want to donate their art work to the DIA now? Shades of Marie Antoinette, to whom many attribute the infamous words,

"Let them eat cake!"

Perhaps she has come back now to sit on the throne here in the State of Michigan.



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2012

CONTACT: Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony
(313) 347-2820

LET THE PEOPLE VOTE!

It is moments like these when we must always remember who we are as a nation and the very nature of the foundation upon which our democracy is built. The words of Thomas Jefferson come back to haunt us today:

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education."

It appears as though there are those who are attempting to take democracy and the right to exercise our voting franchise out of the hands of the people. Last Wednesday we were in the Michigan Supreme Court. A hearing was held on the issue of whether or not 203,000 Michiganders who signed petitions designed to redress their government will be allowed to go forward. These signatures and petitions were signed in good faith absent any ambiguity, confusion or trickery. We believe that the Supreme Court listened in good faith, asked pertinent questions and have enough evidence before them right now to order the Board of Canvassers to place this proposal to repeal public act 4 on the November ballot.

Yet we are concerned that poli-tricks and the effort to delay justice for the people is operating in this process. We have gone before the Board of Canvassers. We have gone before the Michigan Court of Appeals. We have gone before the Michigan Supreme Court. And, yet we still have no justice.

If there are those who believe that by continuously delaying this process that you can delay truth, justice and fairness – you are gravely mistaken. We have our eyes on the court. We are committed to seeing that the will of the people prevails. We will not sit and wait until the door is slammed on us on August 27th as we are told that it is too late for our petitions to be placed on the November ballot.

We know that there are petitions currently up for consideration that do not meet the standards of printed technicality, as required by Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility and two of the members of the Board of Canvassers. Further, we know that there are petitions that have been approved that did not meet the standards in the past which they say that we do not meet today. Why are the people in urban communities across this state being denied access to the ballot now? Why is it that only African American cities in this state are forced to live under an emergency manager or a consent decree? Are there no other cities in Michigan dealing with financial distress? Are Allen Park, West Bloomfield, Redford, Dearborn, and other cities in this state not having financial distress? Are we being politically and economically punished in this state based on who we are and not on anything that we have done? Is our vote being suppressed in order to effect the November presidential election in this state? Is there a strategy at work in Michigan designed to coordinate voter exclusion efforts with states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Texas, Florida, and South Carolina where voter suppression appears to be the order of the day?

It is interesting that the very lawyer for Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility John Pirich 10 years ago stood firmly on the proposition that “as a general principle, all doubts as to technical deficiencies or failure to comply with

the exact letter of procedural requirements are resolved in favor of permitting the people to vote and express their will on any proposal subject to election.” This case involved the charter township of Bloomfield vs. the Oakland County Clerk and the Oakland County Director of Elections, September 6, 2002.

We agree with the question raised at the hearing by Justice Michael F. Cavanagh when he asked Attorney John Pirich, “What has changed in 10 years?” In the words of Chief Justice Robert Young at the same hearing, “It must be a different day and a different client.” We also wonder just like Justice Steven J. Markman when he asked the attorney for Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, “Why are you not on the side of the coalition Stand Up For Democracy based upon the position that you have in this court?” Surely, the court will not fall victim to what the Temptations of Motown used to call a “ball of confusion.” We believe that the court must move forward to approve our petitions for placement on the November ballot. If they fail to do this, we believe it is not about the will of the people, but the will of a political process that is flawed, bent on voter suppression and, thus denies certain Americans their constitutional right.

Michigan can do better than this. We must not be subject to a new political poll tax based on font size. Our substantial priority must be based on the size of the number of citizens demanding access to the ballot and the character of the issues that are presented before our government. Let the petitions go free! Put them on the ballot now!

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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2013

CONTACT: Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

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Michigan, Where Democracy Used to Live!

180 Years ago in his journey across America to report on "Democracy in America", the great French writer Alexis de Tocqueville said: "there is hardly a political question in the United States that does not sooner or later turn into a judicial one." Today we face a major judicial question in the history of our democratic republic. This question is rooted in whether or not every citizen of Michigan will be treated fairly, judged equally and allowed the political representation constitutionally guaranteed. We are here today because we in the City of Detroit, along with 2.3 million Michigan voters still say no to the imposition, the forced acceptance, and the unfair application of one man given the authority to decide the fate of hundreds of thousands of Michigan citizens called an Emergency Manager.

Governor Rick Snyder must be held accountable for this great tragedy which has negated Michigan and thus American democracy. His relentless non-positive action is causing a tremendous negative reaction on the part of those who live in the largest city in our state. While it is the City of Detroit today, stay tuned, it will be your city tomorrow.

We file a lawsuit today because we believe that the imposition of an Emergency Manager on the City of Detroit, and other largely populated African American cities around this state, has a disparate impact on voters of color, has a disparate impact on the City of Detroit, is against the home charters of our city and other municipalities, and gives one individual full powers and duties that have been given to duly elected officials with the consent and the will of its citizens. Today 50.4% or half of the state's African American population is ruled by an unelected Emergency Manager.

We have, however, elected Mayors, City Council persons, County Commissioners and in some cases members of publically governed municipal boards. We further believe that the process of forcing an Emergency Manager on the people of Detroit was flawed and unfair. It was not applied equally in many locations that according to so-called "fiscal health scores" from 0-10 should also have the appointment of an Emergency Manager.

We question the ranking and significant meaning of "fiscal stress" as identified by the State Treasurer and its application in Detroit resulting in the appointment of an Emergency Manager. This is not the same for Oakland County and its lack of appointment of an Emergency Manager in the the cities of Hazel Park, with a population of 9.8% African American, Pleasant Ridge, with a population of 1.9% African American and Troy, with a population of 4.0% African American. Pontiac, with the population of 52.1% African American, was forced to accept the appointment of an overseer which some call an Emergency Manager. The same pattern of obvious

political and economic discrimination has been used in the school districts of Detroit, Highland Park and Ecorse which also have significant African American populations. Van Buren Township with a population of 12.3% African American, and Harper Woods with a population of 45.6% African American had fiscal scores of 6, the same as Pontiac, but have no Emergency Manager.

We in the City of Detroit are entitled to equal protection with equal dignity owed to each voter according to the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. We further believe that the Emergency Manager appointment by Governor Rick Snyder, who is the real Emergency Manager, does not weigh each individual voter in each Michigan county the same. This reminds us of what occurred in the State of Florida during which the Supreme Court determined that the voting electorate, regardless of county, must be weighed and treated the same. It is clear to us one cannot value one persons vote in Detroit differently than that of another vote in the city of Grosse point, Grand Rapids, or Lansing, Michigan. Part of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment guarantees *“having once granted the right to vote on equal terms, the state may not by later arbitrary and disparate treatment value one persons vote over that of another”*. In other words we are appalled that while other counties and cities have so called poor economic stress records they still have the power to elect their own mayors and city council persons who are charged with the direction of their municipalities. Even former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich during the Clinton administration, now Chancellor’s Professor of Public policy at the University of California at Berkley indicates, *“the right to vote is the guiding principle of our democracy. A community that suffers financial hardship should be allowed to make the difficult decision that hardship necessitates, rather than be subject to unilateral dictate. Self-government does not end when creditors are displeased.”*

The founders of this nation and our democracy did not form America simply on the basis of economic distress. It was formed according to the purveyors of history and based on political duress rooted in the reality that the people declared *“no taxation without representation”*. We seem to have forgotten history, disregarded democracy, and are stepping on the rights of Michigan citizens who are entitled to decide their own political destiny.

For those who believe that we can give up a little democracy today to have a few city services tomorrow please remember that once you give it up it is most difficult to gain it back. We believe in partnerships not a dictatorship. We want to work with the State. We do not want the State to work against us. This is not personally against Kevin Orr. This is against a flawed, unconstitutional and tyrannical process. The State of Michigan ought to be ashamed of itself. This is not worthy of our democracy. This is not worthy of Michigan. This is not what America fights for in trying to establish new democracies all over the world.

We call upon the Court to remember our Constitution and call those who are denying democracy to all of its citizens to stand down. Implore them to work with the people and not to deny or discriminate against the people. There are alternatives to this process. There are ways to generate revenues that have never been discussed for our City. There are models on how to aide cities in financial distress that have been ignored by the governor of this state and members of the State Legislature. You cannot have a Pure Michigan when you are constantly polluting the state with public policies that destroy the quality of life rather than enhance the quality of our living.

Henry David Thoreau once said, *“it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.”* We call upon the Court to help the state use more wisdom and not to continue to do desperate things!

END



May 17, 2013

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Pure Michigan but Polluted Policies

As many gather on this island at the Annual Mackinaw Conference, we must remember those who are not here. Much of the discussion and deals that may be cut will have an impact on people not only in this part of the state of Michigan, but lest we forget, in Southeast Michigan also. Michigan touts a Pure Michigan mantra which is supposed to motivate and entice business and community participation throughout our state. Sounds good, but when one looks at Michigan today, the policies coming out of Lansing are polluting the lives of Michiganders.

You cannot talk about a Pure Michigan when the effect of imposing Emergency Managers, eliminating collective bargaining, cutting needy families from financial aid without a job or an alternative, and a continuous emphasis on product over people is most impure. Does this really feel like the Michigan that many of us have come to know and love as the place for economic, social and educational mobility?

I'm reminded of the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, "the surface of American society is covered with a layer of democratic paint but from time to time one can see the old aristocratic colors breaking through". Ain't that the truth. The stench polluting the air of a non-pure Michigan is causing nausea in the lives of individuals from Detroit to Benton Harbor. It is important that we recognize that people do want partnership. It is important to recognize that financial restructuring and city government re-alignment must occur. As a matter of fact in many cases it has.

Yet as we remember the 50th anniversary of the death of Medgar Evers this week in the state of Mississippi, he did not die for Michigan to become the very thing that he fought against which was the elimination and denying of the right to vote. There are alternatives to denying over 50% of the African American population in the State of Michigan the right to elect their own public officials according to the Constitution and their home charters. Even former Secretary of Labor Dr. Robert Reich agrees with this as he said "self-government does not end when creditors are displeased".

We can do better than this. There has been no new ideas, no new recommendations, no new job development, no new job training, no additional revenues for the city of Detroit, no clear vision and no shared sacrifice from those who would dictate what the future of Detroit shall be.

It must be said that many in the city of Detroit are not opposed to change. Many in the city of Detroit do want improved city services. The people in the city of Detroit also want respect, dignity, and their constitutional rights protected. No, we do not want part of the Constitution, nor do we want part of our rights. We want all of our rights and the full implementation and protections guaranteed from by Constitution.

This is why we believe that the financial stress test as applied by the State of Michigan to determine who gets an Emergency Manager based on 0 to 10 points and who does not was not applied equally. Particularly when cities in Oakland County, with majority white populations who are economically stressed possessing a high score similar to Detroit or Pontiac, did not receive an Emergency Manager. We believe that each voter should be treated equally and his or her voting power weighed with the same dignity. We thought this lesson was learned during the historic decision of Bush vs. Gore in the 2000 general election.

While it is important that we have relentless positive action, what we do not need is a constant overbearing subtraction of the power of the people to decide their own destiny. Michigan is better than that.

Detroit Branch . . . NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

December 2, 2011

Say No to An Emergency Manager

First of all on behalf of the Detroit Branch NAACP, we have been consistent, persistent, and resistant to the very idea and certainly the implementation of an Emergency Manager for the City of Detroit. We have expressed our concern regarding this matter from the very inception of this new law. We believe that it goes against the fundamental essence of our democracy. I am reminded of the words of Thomas Jefferson, a hero of America who said, "The two enemies of the people are criminals and government so let us tie the second down with the chain of the Constitution so the second will not become the legalized version of the first."

The Constitution of the United States provides for a free and self determined people who have the right to elect their own representatives. If this issue of an Emergency Manager is rooted in financial distress, let me remind everyone of the financial distress that we have witnessed in Washington DC to the tune of nearly \$15 trillion dollars with a totally dysfunctional Congress. They seem to be more concerned about eliminating the job of one man who lives in the White House, than they are about providing 14 million jobs for those who live in our homes. Yet we have no Emergency Manager for the Congress.

Michigan, like other states, has wrestled with financial distress for the last several years. No Emergency Manager. Wayne County with financial distress, witnesses a sometimes rocky relationship between the Board of Commissioners and the County Executive, yet no Emergency Manager. So the issue of different views between Detroit City Council, the Mayor and Labor do not rise to the level of government intervention. The Congress of the United States and their inability to function makes Detroit look like a model of how people should work together even when they disagree. It is important that we allow the Mayor, Council, labor, and community residents to work these decisions out.

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I do not believe that an Emergency Manager has to be inevitable. The only thing in life that is inevitable is of course death and taxes. Detroit has been here before. Coleman Young in 1977 launched a "Say Yes to Detroit" campaign in which he raised, in the midst of a recession, over \$96 million dollars. This prevented the layoff of nearly 600 police officers and fire fighters. Those of us who love Detroit, through creative strategies, with everyone at the table can say "Yes to Detroit" again. There are many ways to generate revenue. Let us start by returning \$220 million dollars which is owed to the City of Detroit. Let us do more than just cut and reduce. We must also add and multiply. Corporations, businesses, labor and community must come to the table to discuss more than "shared sacrifice" but to also bring to the table a discussion about "shared prosperity."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The time is always ripe to do what is right." It is not too late to do what is right. Detroiters must have the right like everyone else to determine their own future. The momentum that is on-going currently between the City leaders is a strong indication that these issues can be resolved. Let us continue to move forward. However we must also fight on several fronts at the same time. To the people of this City and also the State of Michigan, if you want to know what you can do about this issue, you can sign these petitions. You can distribute them throughout the community and you can also call upon our Governor indicating that we do not need nor desire an Emergency Manager in our City. We must continue to urge our leaders to work together to resolve this very critical issue. Everyone can get in this struggle. Let's all "Say Yes to Detroit."

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Official Press Statement

By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

March 5, 2012

Stand Up For Democracy: Emergency Manager Law Must End

Throughout the course of history those who believe in the virtue, the right and the blessings of liberty have been called upon to stand in the gap between those who would deny such rights and liberties. It is important that we stand in coalition on the issue of voter protection, not because of anything that has been done wrong, but for the cause of everything to be done right. History reminds us from both the States of Florida and Ohio of how individuals confused by hanging chads, dangling chads, dimpled chads or no chads at all can be used subjectively to determine the results not in the election, but the selection of a President by the U.S. Supreme Court. While we appreciate the efforts of the Michigan Secretary of State and her team, in the words of the so called “great communicator” and presidential hero, Ronald Wilson Reagan, “trust but verify.” We want the verification from our direct participation that the hard work and efforts of men and women in barber shops, beauty parlors, churches, union halls, college campuses and street corners are respected and protected by our efforts.

Thousands of Americans have gathered in Selma, Alabama to retrace the footsteps of civil rights workers, students, political and religious leaders. Forty seven years ago they were led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, demanding the right to vote and to ensure voter dignity. We have gathered here to protect the right to vote and to maintain the dignity of all people. Many of us believed that this bridge had already been crossed. We thought this battle had already been won by the blood, sweat, tears and sacrifices of those who preceded us. The State of Michigan has historically been a refuge for those often disenfranchised on their path to freedom and liberty from here to Canada. Now we find that Michigan seems to be a bastion for denying such opportunity. Is our State actively destroying its historic legacy of being a place of opportunity for all people?

Public Act 4 goes against the very conscious of America. Public Act 4 has caused over 226,737 Michiganders to sign a petition to declare that it is wrong, immoral, unethical and in our view, unconstitutional. As we **Stand Up for Democracy** today, we call upon the Bureau of Elections, the Secretary of State, the Board of Canvassers and all those associated with this process to:

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1. Protect the petitions that have been turned in
2. To provide a transparent process for verification
3. To hold accountable all those who associated with this petition effort
4. To adhere to the concerns levied by Congressman John Conyers, Hansen Clarke, Gary Peters, Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow to take care that this process respects the rights of the people to have a just process and that democracy will prevail.

It is difficult to imagine how we as a nation can be fighting for the rights of other people to have full representation and to elect their own public officials in places like Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and the Sudan and then at the same time deny the same rights of its own people here in our homeland. Something is very wrong in Michigan.

This is why our coalition has come together to **Stand Up For Democracy**. We urge every citizen of Michigan to join with us in this noble cause.

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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2012

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THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE HAS BEEN HEARD: DEMOCRACY IS STILL ALIVE!!

The words of Frederick Douglass have even greater meaning today,

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”

Today the people of Michigan can claim a significant victory in the quest for the ability to petition their government as it relates to how the people shall be governed. Will Michigan have a Dictator Law (so-called the Emergency Manager Law) eliminating all elected representatives from local communities based on their financial distress? Or shall Michigan stand on the Constitution guaranteeing the right of the people to have their own elected representation – regardless of financial or social condition?

Our nation was founded upon the principle that the people represent the highest level of authority when it comes to determining how they shall be governed. This battle in the state of Michigan over Public Act 4 is one which never should have been waged in the first place. It was imposed upon the people without their consent. It was never the intent of the framers of the Constitution and the Founding Fathers to usurp the power of the people based on the financial distress of a local community. ‘Less we forget the 13 colonies were in financial distress when they were compelled to come together to forge a Declaration of Independence. They

did not petition King George III of England for an emergency manager. Their petition ultimately would lead to the creation of the United States Constitution. The 226,000 people from all over this state who signed petitions in good faith, trusting in their government and believing in the democratic process did so with the belief that their voices would be heard. Finally, after marching in the streets, protesting at the courts, pleading before justices at every level and Standing Up For Democracy – their voices have been heard and justice although delayed – shall not be denied.

Many thanks go out to the thousands upon thousands of Michiganders who signed the petition, the attorneys who led and advocated forcefully in this battle, the community activists who continued to stoke the fires of freedom, the ministers and labor leaders who prayed and paid for our day in court to be victorious. If anyone doubts that justice is a cause unworthy to be pursued, let them look to the state of Michigan. If anyone doubts that truth crushed to the earth shall rise again – let them look to Michigan. If anyone doubts that the voice of people who have their minds stayed on justice will not be heard – let them look to Michigan. We applaud the Michigan Supreme Court for its ruling that those who represent the noble effort to Stand Up For Democracy with the petition of the people did meet all of the requirements to qualify for the ballot under state election law. Now the people of Michigan will get the opportunity to vote on November 6th to repeal the Emergency Manager Law which is plainly undemocratic, un-American and unworthy of the people who have imposed it upon us. It is a great day for democracy.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made it very clear when he said, “The time is always right to do what is right.” Surely today our time has come. Now, let us prepare for the real battle which, of course, will be fought on November 6th. People, get ready to...

TAKE YOUR SOLES TO THE POLLS AND VOTE!!!!

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