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1 Highland Park.

2 Thank you, Bishop Evans. Thank you.
3 Soul Harvest Church for hosting this meeting.

4 But until we decide to say we are not
5 going to stand up and have no floor for the poor,
6 no roof for the rich, we're not going to stand in
7 the hull of the ship while it's going down and
8 taking water on the top, but we're going to
9 declare that while we fight for democracy, we also
10 need to fight for urban policy, federal
11 intervention, targeted lending for small business
12 owners, a restructuring of our education system
13 that's going to put our young people on the path
14 to economic and education greatness, then what
15 we're doing tonight will have no teeth, will be
16 like a lion roaring but can't bite nothing because
17 we're too [inaudible] and tactless and so we got
18 to move from healing from the suites into the
19 streets and fight for our fair share. Thank you.

20 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Rev. David
21 Bullock, thank you. Thank you very much.
22 President, the Pontiac City Council, the Honorable
23 Lee Jones. Good evening.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JONES: Thank you,
25 Congressman. Congressman Peters, my congressman,

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1 I just told the pastor, you want me to follow
2 that?

3 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: You can.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JONES: All right.
5 Thank you for hosting this this evening. And I
6 apologize for being late. I work right down the
7 street. I can say I'm the recipient of two hats.
8 I work for UAW International Union on Jefferson,
9 and I have experience going through two of these,
10 not only living in the city that's financially
11 strapped, we was going through a company that was
12 financially strapped until we got through it. And
13 just like this, we will get through this.

14 But I stand before you with three
15 stacks of papers, which are from three different
16 emergency managers. Living in the City of
17 Pontiac, we have had three. We are on our third.
18 The first one didn't work, and the first thing he
19 did when he got in office was he eliminated
20 council meetings, so he took it off air so the
21 citizens wasn't informed. Then he finds out he
22 didn't have a right to, so he put it back.

23 The second [inaudible] that everyone
24 heard about was the sale of the Pontiac Silverdome
25 for \$583,000. If any elected official had sold

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1 that building for that price, it wouldn't have
2 been no one left inside city hall -- no one. For
3 a \$55 million piece of property, for 500,000, I
4 would have rather gave it to someone that was
5 going to give me jobs versus someone that's going
6 to buy it and sit on it for future land purposes
7 down the road.

8 The next EM we had was Mr. Stampfler.
9 We had Fred Leeb, Mr. Stampfler, and now we got
10 Mr. Schimmel. Everybody knows Schimmel and
11 Mackinac and that agenda that's being pushed by
12 the Republican Party that's being pushed in
13 several states other than Michigan.

14 We went through a lot here. I listened
15 to the speeches and what we trying to fight, what
16 we against. But living through this has showed me
17 different. Living through a city that your
18 citizens see you at the store, see you at the gas
19 station, see you at restaurants and ask you
20 questions that you have no idea what's taken
21 place. So when we have our meetings, they're
22 pretty much ceremonial. We went through the
23 elimination of council meetings, selling the
24 Silverdome. The IT Department was outsourced to a
25 company that was charging more than what we had

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1 internally with our own citizens working in the IT
2 Department. He dismantled the HR Department. The
3 Finance Department is maintained by Plante Moran.
4 They are our check and our balance. So they write
5 the check and cash the check. Income tax was
6 outsourced to part-time services. Department of
7 Public Works and utilities were outsourced. We're
8 down to three people. We even -- not we, but we
9 get [inaudible] because when it get put in the
10 paper, it's elected officials, but we are not
11 voting on anything that has any merit.

12 We even gave up -- or they gave up our
13 trunk line, so when you have your trunk line being
14 paid for by MDOT, we not even doing our own
15 snowplowing and our own maintenance of the roads
16 so we can make money off of, because what you do
17 have is when you have control of your trunk line,
18 you are able to go down the side streets and
19 maintain those side streets at the cost of what
20 you doing other work for to help out your
21 citizens.

22 The Police Department was outsourced to
23 or combined with Oakland County. With that merger
24 we went from a city police to a county police. We
25 got more police on the street but their contract

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1 was guaranteed. Even if we couldn't pay it, our
2 taxes would be levied before we got our taxes. So
3 they made sure we got paid, and we ended up losing
4 our animal control, because animal control now is
5 with the county, but we still paying for the fee
6 based on the population of the citizens with no
7 one doing our animal control by the county
8 regionalized with other services.

9 They pretty much privatized our whole
10 city. We're down to \$1.4 million in general fund
11 employees. Our general fund was roughly around
12 \$55 million. You know, 75 percent of our funds
13 are paid for employees. We're down to \$1.4
14 million worth of general fund employees. We went
15 from over 600 employees to including now with the
16 Fire Department merging with Waterford, we have a
17 little over 100. That's total.

18 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Mr. President --

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JONES: Yes.

20 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: -- is it okay if
21 Kermit Williams gets one word in?

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JONES: Absolutely.
23 I'm going to pass. He has the history -- I mean,
24 the rest of the chronological order. I will pass
25 that over. I want to thank Congressman Peters on

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1 one other thing he mentioned. Other than saving
2 the \$1.4 million in CDBG funds, they were willing
3 to give -- the second EM was willing to give \$14.8
4 back to the federal government on NSP because he
5 did not want to use that with citizens like you
6 and I that are in need.

7 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Thank you,
8 President Jones. And now Kermit Williams, Pontiac
9 City Council.

10 COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS: First I'd like to
11 thank Congressman Conyers, on the dais, to the
12 pastor here.

13 We've heard a lot of great speeches
14 tonight, but I've been waiting since March 16th to
15 actually testify on what's been happening in the
16 City of Pontiac. President Jones told you a lot
17 of statistics. I want to talk about what Ms.
18 Benson was talking about. Two weeks before our
19 last state representative election, our city clerk
20 was fired. So for the first time in history you
21 have the assistant to the emergency manager
22 running local elections. I want that to be stated
23 for the record.

24 Our deficit when we got our first
25 emergency manager was \$2 million. We are now 12

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1 point something million dollars in debt. I want
2 that to be stated for the record. When we started
3 with the emergency manager, we started off with a
4 bond rating of a B. Now we are at CCC bond
5 ratings. For the audience, that means junk bond
6 status. We couldn't buy a pack of gum with the
7 City of Pontiac's credit rating right now. I want
8 to state that.

9 Our Police Department, 150 something
10 years old, gone. Our fire department, 180 years
11 old, gone. Our IT Department, our Building &
12 Safety, our Water & Sewer Department, sold to an
13 outside company called United Water, which is now
14 currently under federal indictment. I wanted that
15 to be stated for the record. So now we have
16 criminals running our public water. And not only
17 is it not an American company, it's a French
18 company, which is a United States federal danger.
19 We have another country running our water. So
20 they say we're creatures of the state. But we're
21 not even creatures of this country in the City of
22 Pontiac. I wanted that to be stated for the
23 record.

24 The Pontiac City Council has zero
25 salary. The first order that we got after March

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1 16th on March 17th was to fire us as city council
2 and elected officials. Our new current emergency
3 financial manager has deemed himself powerful
4 enough to hire our elected mayor as a consultant
5 with duties that are outlined by the emergency
6 manager. So for the first time in Pontiac
7 history, our local mayor is an employee of the
8 state of the city -- State of Michigan. I wanted
9 that to be stated for the record.

10 The last thing I wanted to say is the
11 previous emergency manager sent a letter to our
12 Oakland County Executive. He stated two things:
13 Either, one, the City of Pontiac be merged into
14 Oakland County, or the second statement, that
15 Pontiac go into bankruptcy. So even though we've
16 had an emergency manager, no solution has been put
17 into place. We're losing residents day by day.
18 And the bottom line is emergency managers don't
19 work. We've lost democracy, we've lost money,
20 we've lost the confidence of the people, and we
21 have been featured in national magazines that do
22 not encourage people to come to the City of
23 Pontiac.

24 Now we are worried about our fired EMS
25 service. Our fire went from a three level --

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1 that's one of the top in the state -- to now it's
2 a level five. People report on a daily basis that
3 their fire insurance has went up by a thousand
4 dollars. Now, the average income in the City of
5 Pontiac is less than \$20,000. Who has a thousand
6 dollars laying around for fire protection? In the
7 historic district, houses that are 180 years old,
8 they are not allowed to get fire insurance period
9 because the state will not insure it, and the
10 response time to come in, and we have no fire
11 station on the majority African-American side of
12 town. Jocelyn Benson mentioned that Pontiac is 52
13 percent African-American. Those people have no
14 service and response times have went up
15 dramatically. And we find out after someone dies.
16 I want that to be stated for the record.

17 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Thank you, Kermit
18 Williams, Pontiac City Council.

19 Would you welcome -- Commissioner,
20 Mayor, State Rep. Martha Scott is here.

21 Now, Michigan Forward, Brandon Jessup
22 is here. Briefly.

23 MR. JESSUP: Good evening. Thank you,
24 Congressman Conyers, for hosting this hearing,
25 once again.

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1 A lot has been said that I don't
2 necessarily need to repeat. I would like to hand
3 to the Congressman our official statement, and
4 also our letter to Governor Snyder on January 17th
5 regarding the transparency and accountability of
6 the review teams that were conducting reviews in
7 Inkster and in the City of Detroit, and at the
8 time, Highland Park.

9 And we wrote this letter regarding
10 review teams under Public Act 4 because Public Act
11 4, the whole policy of emergency management is
12 clearly wrong. You can't justify it. I just saw
13 a young -- well, not a young man, but a brother at
14 the corner of this table try to explain it. I
15 heard over the last year almost many elected
16 officials, many of those from all across the state
17 try to validate their vote for it, but it doesn't
18 change the fact that dictatorship is wrong. This
19 is a democracy. And Governor Snyder's dictator
20 bill -- we can talk about the 700,000 voters in
21 the State of Michigan that will be affected by
22 this law.

23 And I want to debunk one of the myths
24 is that Detroit would be the next one to fall.
25 Detroit has already fallen under emergency

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1 management. Our children experienced it first
2 when our children began to see that the schools in
3 their communities were closing. After we regained
4 control of our school district in 2005, after we
5 passed the bond, over hundreds of millions of
6 dollars to rebuild new schools, to restart our
7 school district here in the City of Detroit, and
8 we found in 2009 that we will be placed under
9 emergency management for failure to comply with a
10 consent decree, another term that we think is fine
11 under the emergency management, under
12 dictatorship.

13 But let's be clear, consent degrees are
14 just the primer for dictatorship. Under no
15 condition would I swear to pay a debt obligation
16 that I don't have the finances to pay, not the
17 year later, but in some cases -- in the case of
18 Inkster, three months down the line. Let's be
19 very clear. Inkster is now performing a deficit
20 elimination plan -- drafted a deficit elimination
21 plan that forces them to estimate tax revenues for
22 their community that are depreciating at eight
23 percent every six months.

24 Now, we are expected to forecast five
25 years ahead of time and freeze revenue. Our

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1 communities are expected under a consent decree to
2 promise that their revenue would stay at this
3 level, when at the time that they passed this
4 legislation or passed this new budget review or
5 passed this change in the deficit elimination
6 plan, just like how you buy that car off the car
7 lot. We all from Detroit. We from Michigan. We
8 understand the depreciation of a car we drive off
9 the lot. So why would I sign a contract that says
10 as soon as I sign it, the revenue will decrease up
11 to 12 percent immediately because of falling tax
12 revenue? Why, because as John -- as Attorney John
13 Philo said very clearly, because the housing
14 crisis is still an epidemic in the State of
15 Michigan. And how asinine is it for us to expect
16 our municipal leaders, our school district leaders
17 to budget for something that is depleting and
18 disappearing every second of the way. But
19 Governor Snyder knows this. The state legislature
20 knows this.

21 Regardless of what party line you sit
22 across, whether you're in Kent County, Oakland
23 County or Wayne County, you understand
24 foreclosure. And right now there's almost a
25 billion dollars coming into the state just to stop

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1 the gap. But we're still asking our communities
2 to pass more bond measures. And back to Detroit
3 Public Schools under emergency management. We
4 were assured that another \$500 million would shore
5 up Detroit Public Schools, that building new
6 schools was the way to go. But just two weeks
7 ago, Roy Roberts, the current emergency manager,
8 the second dictator under Detroit Public Schools,
9 announced that he will close more schools, more
10 public schools and do what? Turn them into
11 charters. So guess what just happened, Detroit?
12 Guess what just happened, Michigan? You have
13 financed the building of brand new high schools
14 and communities that you will never return the
15 investment on.

16 And then at the same time we forced our
17 city to ask the pension board over the last decade
18 to continue to bail itself out of a fiscal
19 deficit, and now that debt on the past debt and
20 the interest on that debt is so high that even Dr.
21 Scorsese, the guy that has trained emergency
22 managers from Michigan State since March 16, 2011
23 says that bankruptcy may not be the option for
24 Detroit either. That relief is the only way we
25 can shore up the fall and tax revenue, the failure

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1 of true shared revenue from the State of Michigan,
2 and the only way that you can shore up every
3 municipality in the state is through relief, not
4 through bankruptcy, and emergency management won't
5 be enough.

6 So I close and say thank you,
7 Congressman Conyers, for holding this -- this
8 hearing today, because it's very important that we
9 go on the record to the federal level about the
10 injustices and the overrun of democracy and the
11 clear attack on the future of America and the
12 future of the State of Michigan. Thank you.

13 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Brandon Jessup,
14 Michigan Forward. I thank you, sir.

15 There are two speakers. Chris
16 Michalakis of AFL-CIO will speak directly after
17 the AFSCME attorney, Herb Sanders. Welcome, Herb
18 Sanders.

19 MR. SANDERS: Congressman Conyers,
20 Pastor, and members of Soul Harvest, I appreciate
21 you hosing this event, and I commend you,
22 Congressman Conyers, on the interim report by the
23 House Judiciary Committee, an excellent report,
24 and to my knowledge, the first written statement
25 by a body of government stating the facts as it

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1 relates to Public Act 4 and opposing this unjust
2 law.

3 I came prepared this evening to discuss
4 and to talk about the egregious nature of Public
5 Act 4, but I think that that is readily apparent
6 with this audience and through the things that the
7 individuals have said that have spoken prior to
8 me, so I will not be redundant.

9 There are two things that I would like
10 to touch upon, however. John Philo did an
11 excellent job updating you as it relates to the
12 lawsuit concerning the 28 plaintiffs. I'm sure
13 Keith Johnson will mention, but I will also
14 mention that there is another lawsuit pending in
15 which we are challenging the altering and amending
16 of collective bargaining agreements held with the
17 Detroit Public Schools. Detroit Federation of
18 Teachers, along with AFSCME are engaged in
19 litigation, maintaining that the actions of
20 Emergency Manager Roberts was a violation of the
21 U.S. Constitution and the Contract Clause as
22 delineated by the Judiciary Committee in their
23 report.

24 We feel very strong and very confident
25 as it relates to our position in that litigation,

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1 and that litigation is pending. So there are two
2 lawsuits, one in state court challenging the act
3 under the state Constitution, another in federal
4 court challenging the act under the U.S.
5 Constitution. But what I'd like to talk about now
6 is where do we go from here. March 16th this act
7 was passed. By June of 2011, myself along with
8 Brandon Jessup and President Garrett and a handful
9 of other people had come together and we made a
10 snowball and we rode that snowball down the hill,
11 and it turned in to close to a quarter million
12 signatures of individuals opposing Public Act 4,
13 seeking a referendum concerning Public Act 4. And
14 as most of you know by now, we will officially
15 announce the number of signatures and the fact
16 that we will be turning in the signatures on
17 February 28th at 5:00 p.m. at 600 West Lafayette.
18 The next day, February 29th, we will caravan to
19 the Great Seal, the Secretary of State's office in
20 Lansing, and we will submit the signatures for
21 certification.

22 There will be buses leaving from
23 Detroit and Flint as of this date, and I would
24 hope that some of the other communities here that
25 are represented will join us in that effort.

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1 We'll be leaving 600 West Lafayette at 9:00 a.m.
2 Anyone who would like to caravan with us or get on
3 a bus should be there by 8:00 a.m. on February
4 29th. And we will box by box walk into the
5 Secretary of State's office and submit the
6 signatures.

7 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: How many boxes?

8 MR. SANDERS: We anticipate between 50
9 and 60 boxfuls, close to a quarter million
10 signatures.

11 Now, I say that -- I say that to say
12 that we will be entering into the trenches truly
13 as it relates to this effort. One, as Congressman
14 Peters previously mentioned, we anticipate there
15 will be immediate action by the state legislature
16 to either pass a law dealing with the interim
17 period before -- from the submission of the
18 signatures to the election in November 2012, or,
19 alternatively, an effort to pass a law that
20 attempts to usurp our petition effort. So as soon
21 as I'm done carrying my box into the Great Seal,
22 into the Secretary of State's office, I'm then
23 going over to see each legislator in Lansing and
24 demand that they allow us to have a vote on
25 whether or not we want democracy or dictatorship

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1 in our state. Close to a quarter million people
2 have spoken and said we want to vote on this
3 issue.

4 It's very imperative that we begin now
5 to contact our Governor and to contact our state
6 legislators and demand that we have the
7 opportunity to have this issue on the ballot and
8 the people of the State of Michigan determine
9 whether or not they want democracy or
10 dictatorship. So I encourage all of you to join
11 with us on February 29th. Help us carry these
12 boxes into the Secretary of State's office and
13 then when we're done, go see each legislator in
14 Lansing and say to them, do not usurp my voting
15 rights. You've done enough to do that already.
16 Let us decide this issue. If we don't do that, if
17 we simply submit the signatures and feel that the
18 job has been done, then we will be failing
19 ourselves and we will be failing each individual
20 who signed on the dotted line.

21 So I thank you for this opportunity,
22 and I look forward to working with all of you in
23 bringing back democracy to Michigan.

24 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Thank you,
25 Counselor. We'll be up there with you when you

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1 turn those 50 or 60 boxes in. Thanks so much.

2 We're going to hear briefly from
3 AFL-CIO Chris Michalakakis, and then we're going to
4 Keith Johnson, president, the Detroit Federation
5 of Teachers, and then we close with the Honorable
6 Marcus Muhammad, Benton Harbor City Commission, in
7 that order, please.

8 MR. MICHALAKIS: Good evening,
9 Congressman Conyers. Good evening, sisters and
10 brothers. And thank you, Bishop Evans, for your
11 hospitality this evening. My name's Chris
12 Michalakakis. I'm the secretary-treasurer of the
13 Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. We represent over 200,000
14 working families in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb
15 counties who work very, very hard in a wide
16 variety of industries, and all of them are
17 threatened by this legislation.

18 Michigan's Public Act 4, otherwise
19 known as the Emergency Manager Law, is not only an
20 attack on democracy at the local level, but it's
21 an attack on democracy at the workplace as well.

22 Let's consider some of the provisions
23 in this dangerous law. First of all, emergency
24 managers only answer to the unelected state
25 treasurer and not to any of their constituents, as

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1 we've heard people say earlier. Emergency
2 managers have the power to merge entire cities and
3 counties without any input from its citizens.
4 Emergency managers can suspend, alter or eliminate
5 collective bargaining agreements without any input
6 from the union or from their constituencies.

7 Emergency managers can lay off and
8 privatize any public employee without any checks
9 and balances from local elected officials. And
10 you would think that even after death you would be
11 free from the power of an emergency manager, but I
12 don't think Jean Klock from Benton Harbor would
13 agree with us, because an emergency manager can
14 even alter the conditions of a will and sell
15 public assets to private corporations. These are
16 not the powers of a manager. These are the powers
17 of a local dictator.

18 And as I talk to members of our
19 organization, they tell me that this is not a law
20 about helping local schools and local communities,
21 but a law that's a blatant power grab to threaten
22 democracy. It's a law about taking away voting
23 rights and workers' collective bargaining rights.

24 And I just want to echo a little bit of
25 what Brother Sanders said here. Over 200,000

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1 voters in the State of Michigan have signed a
2 petition saying that they want to challenge this
3 law in November, and I ask that everyone in this
4 room do exactly what Herb said, contact your state
5 legislators, your rep and your senator. Call the
6 governor's office and tell them you want to have a
7 voice this November and you want to challenge this
8 law through a ballot referendum.

9 When communities are suffering, we
10 should be working together to find solutions to
11 help each other through these hard times, not
12 kicking each other while we're down. With that,
13 Mr. Chair, I thank you for your time and thank you
14 for holding this event tonight.

15 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Thank you, sir.
16 President, Detroit Federation of Teachers, Keith
17 Johnson.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Congressman
19 Conyers. And Bishop Evans, thank you for your
20 hospitality. And thank you, Congressman Conyers,
21 for this forum.

22 Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, Benton Harbor,
23 Inkster, Ecorse. Have there been any other
24 communities that have been harder hit by
25 Michigan's recession than these communities? Yet

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1 as we look at the fact that not only have they
2 lost population, they've lost revenue, they've
3 lost property value, yet the State of Michigan,
4 rather than reaching out and saying what can we do
5 to build up this community, they said let's tear
6 these communities down.

7 I heard Mr. Harris say near the
8 beginning of his statements that Public Act 4 and
9 the authority given to the emergency manager have
10 proven to be effective. And I've never been to
11 Benton Harbor. He may or may not be right, but
12 the fact of the matter is if something is
13 effective, if it undermines the right of people to
14 have a voice in the community in which they live,
15 no matter how effective it is, it is wrong. It
16 tells those people that they are less than. It
17 tells those people that they are incapable of
18 electing leaders to make decisions to represent
19 them and their municipalities or with their school
20 districts. And in other words, it says if you are
21 incapable, then we will impose someone upon you.
22 It's telling those individuals you pay your taxes,
23 but you will have no representation in how those
24 taxes are being used.

25 In Detroit and in the Detroit Public

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1 Schools in particular, in 2009 we had an emergency
2 financial manager bestowed upon us. And let's not
3 get it twisted. There was a difference between an
4 emergency financial manager and an emergency
5 manager, although in my book one is just as bad as
6 the other. But the difference is that during the
7 time we had an emergency financial manager, this
8 individual decided upon himself without any
9 clearly identified checks and balances that not
10 only was he going to impose his will on the
11 financial aspect of the Detroit Public Schools,
12 but while I'm at, I'll just take over academics as
13 well. And so the school board went to court and
14 they won. So what does our Republican-dominated
15 legislature say? Oh, well, you want to play --
16 you want to play by the law? Then we'll simply
17 change it.

18 And so here we have now the emergency
19 managers. But here's where it hit DFT and the
20 other unions in DPS particularly hard. During
21 2009 we all negotiated contracts that were
22 concessionary in nature. Collectively we reduced
23 the district's cost by over \$120 million per year,
24 and at the time, the emergency financial manager
25 said, A, let's take the bankruptcy off the table,

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1 and, B, put the district on the path towards
2 fiscal solvency. And at the same time, we went
3 out -- while we were battling with him, we went
4 out and actually worked with him in order to get a
5 half a billion dollar bond passed in order to have
6 capital improvements in our schools, which our
7 children need.

8 Now, the only thing that changed from
9 the time we negotiated those contracts in 2009
10 when we saved this district over \$120 million a
11 year and March 16th of 2011 was Public Act 4.
12 That's the only thing that changed. Because when
13 we negotiated those agreements, all of us,
14 including AFSCME, we took into consideration the
15 fact that we were losing student population. We
16 took into consideration the fact that the state
17 was cutting back on the per pupil allotment. We
18 took into account the increase in healthcare
19 costs. And, in fact, we even renegotiated our
20 healthcare so that some of the more costly
21 healthcare options were eliminated.

22 And what's the new emergency manager
23 come in and do? He imposed the very things that
24 we have been able to negotiate off of the table.
25 Why? Because he could. Not because the

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1 conditions had changed, not because the district
2 finances got any worse. In fact, he will tell you
3 that last year we ended the school year with a \$43
4 million surplus. Brothers and sisters, that
5 surplus came on the backs of the working employees
6 of Detroit Public Schools.

7 And to add insult to injury, they did
8 pass something called the EAA, which in case you
9 have not noticed, they need \$24 million to start
10 up, but yet they bring in a John Covington, give
11 him \$175,000 signing bonus. I thought maybe he
12 came from the NBA or something. And on top of
13 that, over the next four years, he has the
14 potential to earn \$1.6 million in a school
15 district that claims it is financially strapped.

16 So, now, those are the facts of the
17 matter. Here's the question. One of my favorite
18 movies is The Untouchables, and there are two
19 scenes in the movie The Untouchables that we have
20 to apply to our future. In one Al Capone is
21 getting a shave, and he says when he's being
22 interviewed, because they're talking about his
23 propensity for violence -- and I'm not advocating
24 violence by any means, but he says in the
25 neighborhood in which I grew up, I found out you

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1 could get farther with a kind word and a gun than
2 just a kind word. We've run out of kind words.
3 Our gun is what we're going to deliver on February
4 29th, and that's the half a million dollar -- half
5 a million signatures -- quarter of a million
6 signatures.

7 The second scene is when Kevin Costner
8 and Sean Connery are sitting up in this balcony
9 and they're talking about what it takes to get
10 Capone, and Sean Connery asks him, what are you
11 prepared to do. And Sean -- and Sean Connery
12 asked that to Kevin Costner, and Kevin Costner
13 said, I'm prepared to do everything within the law
14 to do this, that and the other, and then Sean
15 Connery says, and then what are you prepared to
16 do.

17 So the question for us, ladies and
18 gentlemen, after we've delivered on the 29th, what
19 are we prepared to do? Thank you.

20 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Thank you, sir.
21 We are now closing with brief remarks my Marcus
22 Muhammad of Benton Harbor who's already -- who's
23 already spoken, but we want to close with Martha
24 Scott, the former mayor of Highland Park. And
25 Bishop Ealey is going to close us out with a

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1 prayer.

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you,
3 Honorable Chairman and Congressman. I'm so
4 honored to be here from the City of Benton Harbor
5 who has suffered from the brutal gavel of the
6 Emergency Manager Law, and it's where all of the
7 powers of the EM has been duly unleashed. Now, I
8 agree with the acronym EM, but I will change
9 management to mercenary. Now, I know they still
10 give homework in church, Bishop. All right. They
11 still give homework. Look up the word mercenary
12 for just some homework.

13 Now, here's an article -- and I'm going
14 to be brief, Congressman. Auditors, BH still
15 seeing red. Contrary to Harris' prediction, city
16 ends fiscal year with sizeable deficit. Audit
17 shows accounting mistakes, pension fund problems.
18 He was taxing the workers 3 percent, telling the
19 workers that he was placing it in the pension
20 fund, but come to find out, they was siphoning
21 from that tax, sliding it into the general fund,
22 and to today he has not paid one red cent toward
23 the pension, which triggers an emergency.

24 So we're under an emergency mercenary
25 who's practicing and doing things that would

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1 trigger for the state to come in, but nothing is
2 being said by the law board. He just recently
3 laid off a sister who has been working for the
4 City of Benton Harbor for 27 years, on her way to
5 retirement, but since he's not paying into the
6 pension, she can't retire. And this is to, quote,
7 unquote, right the wrong.

8 The NSP II dollars, it's a
9 not-for-profit organization, which is the right
10 arm for Whirlpool Corporation. The City of Benton
11 Harbor got \$13 million. 7 million was taken by
12 the county. The other 6 -- or 7 million was given
13 to Cornerstone Alliance so they could develop
14 their own property. That property was not even in
15 the target zone, but they amended it at the last
16 minute and said if we don't spend it, the money
17 will have to go back. He took the CDBG dollars
18 and he said I'm going to pay to upgrade the parks,
19 but if you went and looked at the parks in Benton
20 Harbor, it's a travesty and an utter shame.

21 So I'm no lawyer, but neither was Abraham
22 Lincoln. He didn't go to law school. He didn't
23 take the bar exam. He was not even an apprentice.
24 But he had a passion and a love for the document
25 that established this country, and he studied it

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1 and combed it and milked it, and now you have the
2 Emancipation Proclamation. But we don't need to
3 have no cum laude degree in law to see that this
4 is illegal legislation. And I could go from the
5 top to the bottom, line by line and prove that the
6 EM law, if I [inaudible] it out and it was a
7 [inaudible] it would read slavery, suffering, and
8 death.

9 Now, I like The Godfather. This is our
10 godfather, but in the movie, godfather was
11 notorious for giving you an offer that you can't
12 refuse. I wish the mayor was here. Because what
13 they have done to him, a good man that came in
14 wanting to do a good thing, but he has been given
15 an offer that he can't refuse.

16 Now, I know my time is about to get
17 cut, but I didn't drive three hours here to water
18 down and dilute what we know is the truth. So
19 last point: Government. You know, Frederick
20 Douglass said that power concedes what? Nothing.
21 No thing without what? A demand. But the demand
22 has to be backed by force. When A. Philip
23 Randolph met with FDR, who was the champion of the
24 Union, he dramatized the problem that existed and
25 the injustices, and the president lit a cigar and

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1 gave all of the invitees one, and he said, Philip,
2 I agree with everything that you have said, but he
3 said, go out and make me do it. So we can send
4 the petitions. That's great. But ultimately we
5 have to make government with the force of the
6 people to do the right thing. Otherwise, they'll
7 thumb their nose and snicker and laugh at our
8 demands.

9 Thank you, Honorable Congressman, for
10 having me. And I love you, Detroit.

11 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: You didn't go to
12 law school, but both of you sound like lawyers to
13 me.

14 Our former Mayor of Highland Park,
15 Martha Scott. Welcome her, please.

16 MS. SCOTT: Thank you, Congressman
17 Conyers. Good evening, everyone. I just happened
18 to have turned on 950 and hear that you were here
19 in my city, and so I had to come and welcome you
20 here, because we've been dealing with a financial
21 manager for a long time.

22 I have a simple saying, which I used to
23 say every day in the legislature, for me today and
24 you tomorrow. So we didn't come and get started
25 in Highland Park when they came after us, when

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1 they had a guy come all the way from Georgia to
2 run our Water Department and he could go back and
3 forth, and the Governor did nothing about it. And
4 so I'm saying -- you said it all. That's what we
5 have to do. We have to all come together all over
6 this state, you know. I stood up and
7 fought for affordable home [inaudible], still
8 fighting for it, and fighting for foreclosure.

9 Finally, my chairman said to me today
10 is that he was going to allow my ordinance to move
11 forward, okay? Because I told him that I was
12 tired of waiting. I was going to take him and the
13 city over to court if we couldn't, because somehow
14 they have a problem with me, you know. When I
15 believe in something, I'm going to stand up until
16 I get some resolve. I stood up eight years every
17 day in the senate. I didn't get too much
18 resolved, but within the last couple of months, I
19 have been meeting with the Governor's people on
20 insurance, and I told them that I couldn't settle
21 for anything unless they took away the zip codes
22 because that's how we are being charged. It's
23 redlining, and we are being charged for where we
24 live.

25 And so if we all come together all over

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1 this state, we can make this happen. You said it.
2 And I'm going to welcome all of you all here to
3 Highland Park. Because Highland Park is my love.
4 Much is given, much is required; isn't that right,
5 Titus, my former mayor? All right. So we all can
6 get together and we -- and he is now our
7 councilman.

8 But we have all been here, living under
9 these financial managers, when it was not quite as
10 stringent as it is today, but any day we could go
11 back into a EFM, so I'm glad you're here. But if
12 we stand up together, Congressman, we can fight
13 this. We can.

14 So thank you all for being here, and
15 always love to thank Bishop Evans, because he just
16 allows us to use his facility and I just thank
17 him. And thank you all. So God bless you all.
18 And we're going to stand together, right? And
19 everybody who participated -- [inaudible] and I
20 heard that on the radio today, so thank you. And
21 I just read about you at 12 years old. I saw
22 that. I said, I know her. That is so wonderful,
23 but that's what we have to do. We all have to
24 stand up and fight together, because do you know
25 what? That's what they've done to us all our

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1 lives, pit one of us against the other, give us a
2 free lunch or something, but it ain't no free
3 lunches, all right? All right. So let's get it
4 together. Thank you all. Love you.

5 CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: Our Bishop will
6 close this out. We thank him for the use of this
7 facility, for his staff assisting us for weeks.
8 Bishop Evans, we salute you and we are so proud of
9 Soul Harvest Ministries.

10 BISHOP EVANS: As we all are standing
11 on our feet, let everyone in the house give a
12 round of applause one more time for the Honorable
13 John Conyers. Come on, let's do it. We can do
14 better than that. We salute him. It would be a
15 travesty if we did not put him back in office. I
16 put my [inaudible] in here now. Soul Harvest will
17 be opening our doors for get the vote out,
18 organizing and making sure that our Honorable
19 Congressman who keeps giving the leadership,
20 quality overseership, is placed back in office so
21 he can take us to the next dimension. God bless
22 you, Congressman John Conyers.

23 Now, may the Lord bless each of you and
24 may He keep you. May the Lord's face shine upon
25 you and may He be gracious unto you. May the Lord

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1 lift up His continence upon you and may He give
2 you peace. Shalom. Nothing missing, nothing
3 broken. Amen.

4 (Forum concluded at 7:53 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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STATE OF MICHIGAN)
) SS
COUNTY OF MACOMB)

I hereby certify that I reported
stenographically the foregoing proceedings and
testimony under oath at the time and place
hereinbefore set forth; that thereafter the same
was reduced to computer transcription under my
supervision; and that this is a full, true,
complete and correct transcription of said
proceedings.

Melinda S. Moore

MELINDA S. MOORE, CSR-2258
Notary Public,
Macomb County, Michigan

My Commission expires: September 6, 2016