

OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

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DETROIT DOES NOT NEED AN EMERGENCY MANAGER

DETROIT--The recent report recommending to the Governor of the state of Michigan that the city of Detroit is now in an economic crisis and therefore should be put on the path for either, an even more aggressive consent agreement, or an Emergency Financial Manager comes at a most critical time in our state's history.

It is apparent that Michiganders who overwhelmingly indicated by their votes last November, to the tune of 2.3 million, to repeal Public Act 4 do not matter to many of the states elected officials. It is very clear that many need to take a trip down the historical journey of our nation and re-familiarize themselves with the purpose of our democracy. I am reminded of the words of one of the framers of our constitution and the crafters of our democracy. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, "I know of 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." Democracy should not be taken from the city of Detroit or any city in the state of Michigan simply on the basis of economic distress.

Have we lost all respect for our democratic principles? Does freedom and justice still have a place in the state of Michigan?

Are the rights of the people to be respected, or simply cast away as if the only ones that matter are those who have the power to change laws that circumvent the will of the people and ignore the common defense while disregarding their pursuit of happiness.

Has Michigan become the new Mississippi of our day? There is no evidence to suggest that simply by the appointment of an Emergency Manager all problems will be solved. Any Emergency Manager brought into the city of Detroit will have to consult with local officials, business persons, and many already in the halls of government in order to fulfill his/her mission.

There is no way that an Emergency Manager is going to come into the city of Detroit and within a period of 18 months resolve what has taken 50-100 years to develop. If the government of Michigan is not willing to bring financial resources to the city of Detroit, to eliminate barriers which prevent City officials from carrying out their fiscal responsibilities or from raising new revenues, if the government is not willing to partner with the City as opposed to taking over the City, than this is simply another exercise in futility.

Those who continue to talk about the legacy of indebtedness of the city of Detroit must also understand the legacy indebtedness of our state, of our nation, and our world. Our nation right now has a \$16 trillion legacy. In addition, how many times have we witnessed the late night changes in the law by state legislators to give those in power advantage to continue to defy the will of the people. Legacy indebtedness means 30-50 years from now. Most of us will be gone to either heaven or the other place by the time the legacy comes to fruition. We live with legacy indebtedness on a day-to-day basis.

Our government, nationally, is three days from sequestration which leads to financial devastation which may lead to human degradation. Yet, there are those who wish to call out Detroit based upon a tax-base that no longer exists, revenue sharing from the state that we no longer receive, jobs that our community no longer has, investments that are yet to be made, choked by a redline that is wrapped around our City strangling its economic growth.

It is important to remember that when former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, spoke to then President George W. Bush concerning his move into the sovereign nation of Iraq, he said very specifically, "Mr. President, if you go into Iraq, then you will own it." Detroit is not Iraq and I raise this only for the point of illustration. It is important for Governor Rick Snyder to also recognize that once you come into the City of Detroit with the hammer of an Emergency Manager you, too, own it.

This means you own the necessity to bring jobs, jobs, jobs, educational reform, security for all neighborhoods, public lighting, transportation, not just downtown development but neighborhood development, human services, and economic opportunity for all Detroiters to participate in the benefits offered by our City and State.

Detroit will then become the State's model and center for what the State can do based upon its belief that the people cannot *really* do for themselves. It is important to remember that Detroit is the largest City in this State. This City sits on an international water way with world trade in the billions of dollars. It is not Pontiac, Flint, Highland Park, Benton Harbor nor Allen Park. It is the City of Detroit.

We do not believe that this is the way in which Detroit can be brought back to the full measure of its greatness. While there may be a financial emergency in many areas we do not need an Emergency Manager. Detroit needs individuals who can manage every emergency. This may be hard for many to understand and to accept, yet, Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. reminds us, "Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think." We call upon the State to do some serious thinking before it takes what it believes is the simplest answer.

Once again, we urge the State to be our partner. We do not call upon the State to be our overseer. The way in which you change the direction of any municipality is not by wiping out the duly elected officials from office, rather it is doing what democracy calls for and that is the voting in of a new administration. The people must ultimately remain as the deciders of their own fate and the determiners of their own destiny. Freedom and democracy have come too far to turn back now.

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