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**PRESS STATEMENT**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***  
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**The Doors of Economic Opportunity Must be Opened  
for African Americans and other Minorities!**

**DETROIT** – One would think that after 50 years since Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to the city of Detroit and first uttered his "I Have A Dream" speech, that the dream would have found fertile ground not only socially and politically, but most importantly economically. As Detroit stands at the crossroad, according to some, of economic and financial recovery, there must be another discovery that African Americans and minorities stand in the middle of the road at a doorway knocking, in order to come in. It is a travesty of economic justice to pay witness to all of the development in this city that is absent of African American and minority participation. It is offensive in a city composed of over 83% African Americans where the doors of economic opportunity are being rapidly closed to the local citizens. For years we fought for economic participation. There were years of executive orders from the Mayor's office, beginning with the Coleman Young era, through today that ensured Detroit citizen participation.

What we are witnessing today is the restructuring of Detroit by those who are not really Detroiters themselves. While we welcome new investment, construction, and development at every level, we are compelled to remind the Governor of the State, the Emergency Manager of this City, and both the Mayor and City Council that we want in. To suggest that we can't find qualified prepared minorities is in fact, a bankrupt statement. Perhaps you need to look for some or maybe ask others to help you find some, if in fact you are unable to bring everyone to the economic table. Let me remind those in political leadership that Federal dollars, State dollars, and City dollars are provided by citizen taxation. Even private financing is enabled due to citizens purchasing your products and participating in your ventures.

Perhaps many have forgotten that when Comerica Park and Ford Field were being constructed, financed privately and publicly, the Detroit City Council created a Minority Task Force for New Stadia Development. The purpose of this task force was to ensure minority participation in construction, interior and exterior design, demolition, procurement at every level and a commitment of economic participation by the broader community. How do I know this, because I chaired the taskforce. Minorities realized over \$200 million in contracts and economic opportunity for both Comerica Park and Ford Field, there was indeed key and unprecedented minority participation. As we stand at the doorway of an M1 rail system, a new hockey arena and entertainment center, financial commitments for new housing development, and most recently the Woodward Ave. Corridor, economic development projects for the jail cite currently out for RFPs, a new bridge between Detroit and Windsor, landscaping and new development along Detroit's' riverfront, and any other development in this City, all of us must be at the economic table. Therefore, we demand that both the Governor and the Emergency Manager along with corporate and business interests in this city must not overlook African Americans and other minorities. We must not, and cannot have two Detroit's. That is a Detroit for the haves and the privileged in downtown, and a Detroit for those who are not as privileged in the neighborhoods. There is not security in emphasizing half of Detroit. We must have whole Detroit. We must have one Detroit.

There must be accountability by the corporations and businesses that do business in the borders of the city. Therefore questions must be asked, before your development even begins;

- How many local people have you employed?
- What companies are you joint venturing with to develop this project?
- Do you have internships for local residents for job development and economic partnering?
- What provisions are being made for procurement and services with local residents and businesses after your development is completed?
- What measures will you employ in order to determine the success of the goals and objectives outlined for you success?

- What other local businesses will be stimulated and created, if any, as a result of your development?
- Will you not only joint venture in the City of Detroit with minority businesses, but will you also, if given the opportunity, take Detroit businesses to joint venture with you in other communities?

These are only a few questions that must be asked of those who seek to do business and are doing business in the City of Detroit. Just saying that you love Detroit and are committed to Detroit is not enough. For we know that have a romance without having economic finance is indeed a nuisance.

This is the City that established a Black middle class. This is the City that helped to restart and retooled the auto industry. This is the City that gave the political and economic examples to Atlanta, to DC, to LA, and to Chicago. We did it in Detroit. We have come too far to be turned back now. Therefore, the NAACP will be announcing a corporate and business report card that will take effect beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2014. We have done a great deal on the political frontier. The economic frontier is still yet to be established. Stay tuned, more to come.

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*For more information on the Detroit Branch NAACP please call (313) 871-2087 or visit [www.detroitnaacp.org](http://www.detroitnaacp.org).*