



## OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

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### ***Federal Monitors Arrive in Detroit to Safeguard Votes During Detroit's General Election***

**DETROIT --** The right to vote is among the most sacred rights that citizens of our great nation have acquired. This right is particularly important to African Americans and other minorities who have had a history of hard-fought struggle and human sacrifice in order to secure these rights. The soil of our very nation, from the South to the North, has been intermixed with the blood, sweat, and tears of many who have fought to acquire these rights. In August of this year, the Detroit branch NAACP, filed a request with the Department of Justice asking for federal monitors to come to the city of Detroit to monitor tomorrow's general election. This was done as a result of the disqualifying by the Wayne County Board of Elections of approximately 20,000 votes during the primary election. At that time, Wayne County officials declined to certify up to 20,000 write-in votes of the primary election. It was also reported of incidents of double counting and ballots not being counted, as well as individuals voting who may not have been eligible to vote. The question of the validity of absentee ballots, and authentic signatures were also questions that seemed not to have substantial answers.

While the primary election is now over, it was our contention then as it is now that pursuant to 42 U.S.C § 1973i, no person acting under color of law shall fail or refuse to permit any person to vote, who is entitled to vote under any provisions of this chapter or is otherwise qualified to vote or willfully fail or refuse to tabulate count or report such person's vote. A violation of this provision is subject to both civil and criminal sanction. Due to the number of irregularities, it was and is our belief that in order to safeguard and protect the rights of all voters, regardless of who their candidate of choice may be, that the Department of Justice under the Voting Rights Act should be called upon to monitor the Detroit elections.

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We believe that sending in such observers will ensure Detroiters of a safe and protected right which has been earned by the life sacrifices of those who have come before all of us. We are pleased that the Department of Justice will watch and record activities during the voting hours at various polling locations inside the city of Detroit. Therefore no one should stay at home resigned to the belief that their vote does not count, or if they vote, it will not be secured. The Detroit branch NAACP, the office of Congressman John Conyers Jr., and many others are committed to a fair and democratic process. We have sacrificed too much, made too much progress, withstood too many challenges, endured too many obstacles, and missed too many opportunities for us not to participate in this most important election. The Detroit branch NAACP will continue its Election Protection program beginning at 7am tomorrow morning until the polls close. Our hotline 313-664-2424. We will also have our own lawyers and challengers available to work with the city of Detroit election officials, as well as the Department of Justice monitors if and when needed. Now is not the time for anyone to be a spectator as it relates to city elections. Now is a time for all Detroiters to be a participators in every city election.

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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).*