



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2014

CONTACT: Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

(313) 347-2820

Racism is Still the Challenge of Our Times

DETROIT -- The most recent remarks attributable to the NBA Owner of the Los Angeles Clippers Donald Sterling, come at a very critical time in our nation's history as we continue to fight for equal opportunity, dignity and respect for all people. We must continue to remain vigilant in speaking out against policies and declarations of intolerance that take us back rather than move us forward. If these comments are proven to be true, and there is every indication that it is in fact the voice of Donald Sterling on recorded tapes, it is indeed a major rupture in the body of the National Basketball Association. Donald Sterling in his denigration of African Americans, Latinos and minorities in particular, present all of us with a teachable moment. Unfortunately, we have not yet arrived at a post racial society. Whether it is the unsavory and denigrating comments of Cliven Bundy in Nevada concerning his approval of slavery, this pattern of open discrimination seems to be rising. Mr. Bundy even suggests that enslavement where Blacks were forced to pick cotton, would seem to be a better system for African Americans rather than their "dependency on the government for handouts." This is despite the fact the Mr. Bundy has refused to pay the government grazing fees for his cattle, on land that he has not owned for the past 20 years.

Mr. Sterling has said that, "blacks are not welcome at his basketball games and certainly should not be in Instagram photos with his girlfriend," when in fact he has a team filled with African Americans, an African American head coach and assistant coaches, who financially bring millions of dollars to his pockets each and every season. These remarks strike at the very heart of an illness that affects the growth and continuous progress of our nation to be a place where diversity is valued rather than a place where diversity is maligned. We must continue to work for an America that respects all of her sons and daughters.

The Detroit Branch NAACP supports the decision of the Los Angeles Branch to withdraw its presentation of their Lifetime Achievement Award to Mr. Sterling. We applaud all voices, black and white, professional players currently in the league and those retired, news commentators, corporate sponsors, and even the President of the United States for their comments declaring that this kind of attitude and hatred is indeed unacceptable in the year 2014.

We look forward to our own Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner scheduled for Sunday, May 4th at the New Cobo Convention Center, where we will celebrate **“1964-2014...50 Years Later...One Man’s Commitment...One Nation’s Promise.”** We are pleased to have among our special honorees the longest serving Congressman in U.S. history, The Honorable John Dingell and retiring Senator Carl Levin, longest serving Senator in Michigan’s history, as they will be presented with the James Weldon Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award. We invite all people to join us in celebration!

We remain committed to the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who continues to inspire when he said 50 years ago, “I have decided to stick with love, hate is too great a burden to bear.” Let us all lift the burden of hate and intolerance off the shoulders of a nation that is indeed desperate for a better way and a better day.

#

For more information on the Detroit Branch NAACP please call (313) 871-2087 or visit www.detroitnaacp.org.