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Investment brings jobs

By Jimmy Settles

Investment brings jobs. And more jobs makes for stronger neighborhoods.

Another Detroit neighborhood is about to see a major transformation as Ford plans to invest \$783 million in a Corktown campus that will bring up to 5,000 jobs to our city, and revitalize one of our greatest historic assets, Michigan Central Station.

As the former Vice-President of UAW-Ford and current Group Executive for Neighborhoods for the City of Detroit, I couldn't be happier to see Ford making this incredible investment, which will have a tremendously positive impact on that neighborhood and the rest of the city. Beyond the development itself, Ford has done an outstanding job of responding to the expressed concerns of residents and has delivered a meaningful community benefits package that addresses everything from housing concerns, job training, transportation, environmental concerns and more.



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But it concerns me to see some downplay the significance of Ford's investment because of the company's request for tax incentives. There has been some debate about the need for Ford to receive approximately \$104 million in a city property tax abatements. I can tell you that the benefits to the city in the form of jobs and income tax revenue are immediate and far outweigh the cost of a property tax incentive.

Jobs are changing Detroiters' lives

Incentives are the tools available to the city of Detroit to remain competitive in attracting major projects, and we would be remiss to not take advantage of those tools in our efforts to build a better city for all of us. There already are plenty of examples where Detroit has used these tools to leverage benefits for Detroiters that we can measure against.

The new Flex-N-Gate plant on the city's east side has just begun production of front ends for Ford vehicles. This \$160 million facility is the first new manufacturing plant in Detroit in over 20 years. While it had other locations vying for it, Detroit landed this project with the help of a \$7.2 million tax abatement. Over the lifetime of that abatement the city of Detroit will receive \$10.7 million in income tax revenue.

More important is that Flex-N-Gate also has been living up to its commitment to provide jobs for Detroiters. To-

day, 50% of their first 230 hires are Detroit residents, many of them right from the surrounding neighborhood - Detroiters like Tashar Mosby. Tashar is an engineer and graduate of Focus: HOPE's Machinist Training Institute & Center for Advanced Technologies. Flex-N-Gate hired Tashar as a Quality Engineer, and he's since been promoted to Industrial Engineer. A Focus:Hope program that Tashar helped develop has since produced 70 more Detroit graduates, all of whom have been hired by Flex-N-Gate.

LINC Logistics, which is directly across the street from Flex-N-Gate and also received a \$1.6 million property tax abatement, built a \$30 million facility that has hired 52% of its nearly 200-person workforce from the city of Detroit. They've hired Detroiters like Raven Harris, a single mom who was hired as a dock worker not far from where she grew up near Van Dyke and Outer Drive. Now she has a job she can walk to.

Over at Sakthi Automotive in Southwest Detroit, a \$1 million abatement is leveraging \$10 million in new income taxes over the life of the abatement. Sakthi has been one of our city's leaders in the hiring of Detroiters who recently have been released from prison. In fact, Sakthi has given a second chance to more than 200 returning citizens, which is truly remarkable. Sakthi employs Detroiters like Corey Johnson. Corey, a returning citizen hired to work in an entry level position, was quickly promoted to become a supervisor at the plant.

These life-changing events were made possible because leaders used the right tools, including tax incentives, to bring about these developments instead of letting them slip by to the benefit of other communities.

So far, we've seen thousands of jobs created, and thousands of Detroiters hired, on projects where the city used incentives to attract projects. And when Ford completes its project, and 5000 people get to work across their campus, it will no doubt spur additional development and create jobs for more Detroiters.

It's understandable that people will question projected or promised benefits in exchange for an incentive, but already-completed projects have proven incentives bring jobs and increase the tax base to our neighborhoods. As we work to improve the quality of life for our residents, the City of Detroit will continue to leverage these incentives to attract more developments and to boost job growth.

We owe it to Detroiters like Tashar, Raven and Corey.

Jimmy Settles is former Vice President of UAW-Ford and current group executive for neighborhoods for the City of Detroit.

DWWG Leadership Open Letter to Women on Confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court

On Friday October 7, 2018, the leadership of the Democratic Women's Working Group, Congresswomen Lois Frankel (FL-21), Brenda Lawrence (MI-14), and Jackie Speier (CA-14), released an open letter to women in American in response to the nomination and confirmation process of Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

"Women and survivors of sexual harassment and sexual violence have suffered in silence for too long. The United States of America is long overdue for not only a policy shift but a true cultural change when it comes to our response and prevention of sexual abuse. We need women to be heard. We need survivors to come forward with the expectation that they will not be disregarded or disbelieved. Rather, we must demand accountability, justice and a fair and thorough process. The nomination and confirmation process of Judge Ka-



vanaugh has been only another example of why so many survivors are afraid to come forward. I am proud to join the leadership of the DWWG in this open letter to women in America. We will continue to fight for change so that women and survivors can feel free to speak their truth. The culture must change, and this change should start from the top." -Rep. Brenda Lawrence

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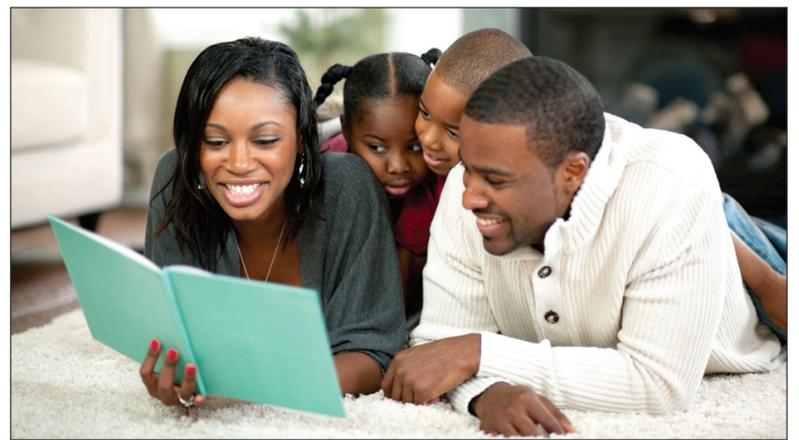
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Literacy and Liberty for All: Why Detroit's Kids Need More than Access to a School or a Lap

By Dr. Carole Symer

"Literacy means liberation."—Septima Clark, founder of Citizenship Schools

In June, U.S. District Judge Stephen Murphy III, in effect, told seven Detroit children that literacy is not a legal right. He dismissed their class action lawsuit against the State of Michigan. That same month, 47 miles west of Detroit and 35 miles south of Flint—a town also in debate about literacy—a sign on the lawn of a public school in White suburban Brighton declares "Kids Become Readers on the Laps of Parents."

Sounds pretty simple. Right? But most parents know kids need more than a lap. Michigan knows too and promises access to a free public school. Yet, by law, Michigan claims schools only need to be open for children's rights to education to be met. Is it any wonder that while literacy around the globe is increasing, half of Michigan students failed this year's state exams? Yet, for years, only 5-7 percent of Detroit's children are reading proficiently.

While Judge Murphy acknowledged that the conditions of Detroit's classrooms are appalling, textbooks are outdated, and literacy is essential to human life, he dismissed the case of seven students with test scores next to zero.

Some legal scholars disagree with Murphy, quoting examples like the 1982 court decision in favor of education for immigrant children. Justice Brennan argued that "illiteracy is an enduring disability" and "imposing disabilities on the child is contrary to the basic concept of our system."

In his book, *The Human Right to Language*, attorney Lawrence Siegel argues for a recognition of students' rights based on the First Amendment. At the heart of free speech, Siegel shows, is the right to access information in all its forms and to participate in the free flow of ideas. In school, he contends, it starts with accessing literacy.

If Siegel is onto something, the Supreme Court better get ready. There are going to be more of these cases. All over Michigan. Even once the court agrees, parents are going to need to push back hard on their schools and Michigan. To parents of struggling readers, here's how and why:

Learning to read requires engaged

teachers, tax-payers, and the state working tirelessly to expand each kid's vocabulary, show how the word 'cat' has three sounds, that word order alters meaning.

Meet Nellie, a smart and curious African-American 10-year-old in Detroit. Thanks to teacher and parent pressure on the district, Nellie was diagnosed with dyslexia. Thanks to research by Sally Shaywitz at Yale University, her teacher knew that the cure is educational. With intensive support, Nellie is learning to read.

Dyslexia strikes even the smartest of minds across racial and economic divides. While some learning disabilities are genetic, some are environmental, including exposure to lead. So is "imposing disability" by a state's neglect. The kids of Gary B. v. Snyder may not be dyslexic, but they have a right to evaluation and teachers trained to address their gaps.

Yes, a parent's lap is where love grows strong. But when it comes to literacy, our country's class system divides those laps by zip code. Too often, early gaps in reading widen among children in economically impoverished neighborhoods because of state funding decisions, further disadvantaging some while privileging others. The story of Gary B. and Detroit attest to this.

In 1974, twenty years after the *Brown v. the Board*'s ruling that segregation by race was unconstitutional, the Supreme Court reinstated segregation in Detroit. While acknowledging that Detroit students' Constitutional rights had been violated, the decision was to put the burden back on Detroit and spare White suburbia. Thurgood Marshall disagreed, along with three other judges, arguing that "School district lines, however innocently drawn, will surely be perceived as fences to separate the races." Justice Douglas added, "Michigan by one device or another has over the years created black school districts and white school districts," and, in doing so, "the State washes its hands of its own creations."

Literacy undergirds everything. Check the stats. Together, let's check our biases against children, and re-invest in literacy and liberty for all.

Dr. Carole Symer is a psychologist who's authored hundreds of diagnostic reports for struggling readers to get their educational rights fulfilled. She teaches at New York University.

Arbulu Issues Statement on MLPP/CBPP Report on Disparities in Higher Education Costs in Michigan

Agustin V. Arbulu, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, has issued the following statement on a report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Michigan League for Public Policy outlining significant disparities in the cost of access to a college education.

"We just received a copy of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Report on higher education. This important report makes clear that the cost of access to a college education is unreasonably high, especially for families of color in Michigan. The Governor's Marshall Plan for Talent is an example of an initiative aimed at tackling the challenges to earning a livable wage and achieving an ed-

ucated workforce by creating a unique partnership with educators and businesses.

We strongly encourage developing policies, across the board, that focus on achieving equitable outcomes in educational access and in access to resources and opportunity in general. The goal of achieving equity is an effort the Michigan Department of Civil Rights is actively spearheading with governments and organizations throughout the state. It is vital to make sure all our young people have access to higher education and opportunity without saddling them with crippling debt which will inhibit their ability to succeed and get ahead."

Statement from MCRC Co-Chair Laura Reyes Kopack Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day

At the October 8 meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, Commission Co-Chair Laura Reyes Kopack delivered the following statement recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day.

"Across the country and the western hemisphere, Native Americans and Latinx will celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day today, October 8, to recognize the importance of the indigenous people who were here long before Columbus. We, too, celebrate with them.

Millions of indigenous people were displaced by European colonists, and between their arrival and the Pilgrims' arrival in 1620, some estimate that up to 90% of the native population died, mostly from exposure to diseases brought over from Europe. The remaining indigenous people saw their land and culture nearly destroyed by the violence of colonization.

Even today, Native American commu-

nities continue to be a target of institutional racism.

Indigenous Peoples' Day serves as a commemoration of their history and culture and highlights the Native American communities that have always been here. Indigenous Peoples' Day serves as a way to respect and honor Native American communities in Michigan and across our country."

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission was created by the Michigan Constitution to carry out constitutional and legal guarantees against discrimination. The Commission is charged with investigating alleged discrimination against any person because of religion, race, color or national origin, sex, age, marital status, height, weight, arrest record, and physical and mental disability. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights serves as the operational arm of the Commission.