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# Michigan AFSCME Council 25

## News Release

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**Michigan Circuit**

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### **CITY OF DETROIT COALITION OF UNIONS** **IMPLORES MAYOR DAVE BING TO MAN UP AND KEEP HIS WORD**

*Letter sent to the Mayor today*

**Detroit MI June 29, 2012** – The City of Detroit Coalition of Unions sent the following letter to Mayor Dave Bing imploring him to be a man of his word:

*Dear Mr. Mayor:*

*I write this letter to you, Mr. Mayor, for delivery through Lamont Satchel, your Labor Relations Director. This letter also follows up on my previous letter of June 22, 2012, to the City, which was never responded to. This letter implores you, Mr. Mayor, to “man up” and stand by your word.*

*I am in receipt of a proposal for a new bargaining agreement. I received it last night, and I met with Labor Relations yesterday at 1:00 pm. This proposal is a far cry from the agreement which we signed just four months ago, on February 1, 2012, which was ratified the following month. The City is acting in violation of PERA in a number of respects, including but not limited to, by rejecting the February 1st agreement and ignoring its obligation to bargain under PERA.*

*But aside from the legal issues, this letter is about your character, Mr. Mayor. You stood before the citizens of this City last year, and announced that the City was in crisis. You said you needed help from your unions in financial concessions. These were the same unions that you insulted earlier that year by saying “Either they can't read, they can't add or they can't comprehend,” and other things. But we saw past your corrosive rhetoric and saw the needs of the City, and in 2011 agreed to deep cuts including 10% wage reductions. So in November*

2011, unions were in no mood to hear you asking to open up these concessionary contracts and take deeper cuts. Nonetheless, in December, these unions agreed to negotiate deeper cuts. We did this on your word ... that our City was running out of cash.

You told these unions that we had to negotiate in a coalition, and had no time to negotiate one by one. Again, seeing past your paternalistic attitude, we saw the needs of the City, and formed a 33 member Coalition. We did this on your word.

On February 1, 2012, you came to the AFSCME Council 25 union hall. You shook my hand and the hands of the union presidents in this Coalition, telling them that you appreciated their work and sacrifice. You also promised to push this Tentative Agreement through to have City Council ratify it. Your appointees even offered help on how we all could assure passage of the TA at City Council. You promised that you would see to it that unions who signed up to the Coalition saw a benefit for agreeing to the sacrifice. Most importantly, you promised that these unions would have to incur no more sacrifice during the life of the three year deal, as the sacrifices therein were enough fiscally. The union presidents took your commitments and went to their membership to push ratification of this TA. We did this on your word.

Well, this experience proves that your word means nothing. Mr. Mayor, you reneged on your word and you told City Council not to approve the TA that you had just negotiated with us. You then hid behind your appointee Kirk Lewis and claimed that you never knew he would tell City Council to reject the TA – which was a lie. You reneged on your word that the financial concessions were all that you needed. This new proposal is for a brand new agreement, with much greater financial concessions. And this is despite the fact that the City is in better financial shape today than when we signed the TA in February.

You reneged on your word that the work rule changes you wanted in December were not burdensome. In December, you sought unidentified work rule changes in the City operation. You negotiated the TA by eliminating those. But this new proposal that I got last night goes much beyond the work rule changes, which you still have not identified which work rules need to be changed. Even in federal court, the City and State lawyers were asked by the judge, but could not identify what the work rule changes would save the City. This is a brand new agreement which comes close to making these City workers at will with almost no union rights.

Lamont Satchell told me that the City did a work rule audit, asking each department what work rules are onerous, and how much money would be saved by making changes in the work rules. Satchell said that no department told him of any substantial savings from making changes in the work rules. He said that there is a little bit of savings, but it is inconsequential. I asked for the information he received from the departments, and he promised I would have it. I

*have not received it. Also, Pat Aquart said that the City was contemplating outsourcing of the payroll function of the City. He claimed they did a look of the cost to the City. I asked for that information. I have not seen it.*

*I also asked about why the City felt it had no duty to bargain, given the fact that Public Act 4 did not remove all of the City's bargaining obligations under PERA. The City could not explain why and said it would get back with me. Even the Financial Stability Agreement, which we contend is illegal, contains a requirement that the City negotiate a new contract with the Unions. See Article 4 and Annex D. The City Labor Relations Division shall negotiate the contract in consultation with the Program Management Director, then present it to the Financial Advisory Board, followed by approval of the Mayor, then review of the City Council for a minimum of a 30 day period. None of that has happened. And again, we contend that we have negotiated a contract, which was signed on February 1st.*

*As to the work rule changes, what are the work rule changes that you are seeking? Identify each specific work rule, and the adjustment that you seek to the language of the work rule. While the Union maintains that the work rules were negotiated in the TA, by not changing them, we are interested in seeing which work rules you want changed and how you propose to change them and the savings attached to each. We will share that information with our members.*

*You should know that there is an unfair labor practice charge pending, as well as federal litigation, all challenging the City's actions with respect to these 33 unions in the Coalition. At yesterday's meeting, I told Reginald Jenkins that the City has bargained in bad faith and is regressively bargaining. The City failed to explain why it refused to take the tentative agreement to City Council.*

*This Administration has consistently lied to the public, the media, the Unions, the City Council, the Law Department, and yourself. It is unfortunate that there is no credibility in this administration. That is a shame, because people are supposed to have trust in your leadership. There is no faith or hope left for the citizens because this Administration had betrayed the citizens and the community as well. Betrayal of your own people is devastating. Living with yourself has got to be hard, when you look in the mirror every day to see what you have become. Shameful as it may be, we are pursuing charges before MERC on this issue.*

*Looking forward to hearing from you.*

*Ed McNeil, Special Assistant to the President, Michigan AFSCME Council 25 on behalf of the Coalition of Unions*