

Moratorium NOW! Coalition Says Vote Yes on Proposal P

Detroit is in desperate need for a new political awakening as represented by the advent of Proposal P which would adopt a new charter (DetroitCharter2018.com) to govern the city.

An amicus brief filed by a number of Wayne State University Law professors says that the Charter stands on solid legal grounds despite the initial statement by Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The election of Whitmer in 2018 could not have been possible without the voters of Detroit.

However, the paid Dugganite groupings throughout the city are aligning themselves with the right-wing Republicans, corporate and banking interests and institutional racists. According to a statement by the law professors:

“The people of Detroit have faced many attempts — some successful, like the state takeovers of the city finances and city schools — to inhibit their democratic control of those who govern them. In this case, the Governor’s failure to approve the proposed charter should be treated as the political act it clearly was intended to be, not as a democracy-blocking veto. The voters of Detroit are constitutionally and statutorily the only proper authority to decide whether to accept the proposed charter or reject it.” [<https://wdet.org/posts/2021/06/01/91034-michigan-supreme-court-suspends-decertification-of-proposal-p-allowing-detroit-charter-question-on-august-ballot/>]

Over the last twelve years (2009-2021), the City of Detroit and its majority African American and working class population has been subjected to a wave of efforts aimed at the further oppression, marginalization and exploitation of hundreds of thousands of its residents.

During the census period of 2000-2010, a quarter of the population was forced out of the city due to predatory lending resulting in unprecedented levels of home foreclosures and evictions. There was the loss of one million jobs throughout the state, many of which were located in the Detroit metropolitan area. The failure of successive governors, state legislatures and unrepresentative municipal administrations to defend the City’s assets and its residents manifested itself in Detroit being designated for many years as the most economically underdeveloped city in the United States.

We have undergone illegal impositions of emergency management of the public schools and the municipal government. In 2013, right-wing gubernatorial appointed emergency manager, working on behalf of the corporations and banks, petitioned the federal courts to place the city under bankruptcy.

Despite the 600 people who filed legal objections to the contrived bankruptcy, the largest of such proceedings within the history of municipal governments in the U.S., Federal Judge Steven Rhodes granted the motion filed by an unelected overseer in contravention of a statewide election in 2012, the Michigan State Constitution as well as public protests. Since the bankruptcy, the City of Detroit has lost control of its public lighting system, water services, Belle Isle, the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), among other important and essential institutions. City of Detroit workers suffered tremendous losses to their pensions, up to 40% in some cases

The existing proposed charter revisions are the result of a process of broad-based democratic discussions. Not only was the Charter Commission elected in a popular vote during 2018, various working groups were established over a period of two years which debated and refined proposals to remake the city in the image of its people.

Nonetheless, the reactionary interests and their functionaries are attempting to deny the people of Detroit the fundamental rights of home rule and self-determination. Those who oppose the Charter are the same corporations and their agents which attempted to justify emergency management, bankruptcy and the ascendancy of a corporate-oriented mayor who does not even live in the city.

The Detroit Chamber of Commerce, which only takes from the working class and poor residents of the city through tax captures and other forms of preferential treatment, has come out against the Charter. The agents of foreign capital say that the Charter is not legal and will threaten the fiscal well-being of the City of Detroit.

This is an absurd conjecture since there is no fiscal stability for most people living in Detroit over the last few decades. People have been overtaxed, denied the right to live in peace and prosperity, while the businesses owned by the likes of Dan Gilbert, the Illitch family, the Penskes, etc. and their backers within the banking sector, take the tax dollars of the working class for their own profit-making adventures which have proved to be an abysmal failure.

We have an obligation to support the mass democratic actions of the people of the city of Detroit. We are encouraging everyone in Detroit to vote on August 3 for Proposal P as a springboard for retaking and rebuilding the municipality in a more equitable and just manner.

Moratorium NOW! Coalition
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