



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

OUR REGION NEEDS COOPERATION NOT DENEGRATION!

Detroit, MI – The recent comments of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Paterson concerning the effort of CEO's in Detroit and the region to come together to advance the cause of Southeast Michigan were unwarranted, unnecessary, and most racist. The city of Detroit, along with Southeast Michigan is in a great period of outreach and expansion for business and community. This should inspire all of us. CEO's who have never joined together in the quest to bring economic development to this region are now working together for the benefit of our communities. The comments of L. Brooks Paterson indicating, *"Oh hell no. I'd rather join the Klan"* come at a very critical time. The racial divide within our nation is stark and deep. If we are to progress as people who believe in diversity and sharing the resources for all people, this racial wall must be torn down.

Mr. Brooks did issue an apology indicating, *"Sometimes when I'm passionate about a topic, I choose sharp words and purposely engage in hyperbole to get my point across."* Someone should inform Mr. Patterson that sticks and stones may break your bones, but words that reek of racism can break your spirit and your will. An apology is appropriate, but more than just an apology is having the will and a plan to do better. We do not need walls of division between suburb and city. We need bridges between every city and area in our region. These are the kind of words that remind me of George Wallace standing in the doorway at the University of Alabama in 1963 in which he said to black students trying to enter, *"Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."*

Having passion is a great thing. Being highly motivated to protect your interests and to acquire new opportunities is great. However, we must have the kind of passion that brings people together instead of tearing them apart. We must have the kind of emotional intensity that drives us to places and spaces that we may have never ventured. No one must be allowed to stand in the doorway of progress. This type of twisted thinking is what stands in the doorway preventing regional transportation, educational advancement, economic development, lower insurance costs, racial harmony, and equal opportunity. How long will we continue to allow individuals to stand in the doorway of human progress? Perhaps someone should send Mr. Patterson a memo. The memo should indicate that the days of division and separation are over. The time for cooperation and collective participation began several years ago. *Signed, All Those Who Believe In Progress And This Is Not A Hyperbole.*

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