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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

A BETRAYAL OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE!

DETROIT – Never have the words of the beloved Congressman John R. Lewis been so truly disrespected and so quickly forgotten – *“The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democratic society, and we’ve got to use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.”* Members of the Michigan Legislature did not use it and Detroiters and others in Michigan are losing it. We lost the battle to have the interest of the citizens who sent them to Lansing respected and protected. Staying at home when you should be at work, hanging out in the halls or in a secure office when you should be doing the work for the people is shameful politics. You are in fact suppressing the rights of the people to be heard. This ain’t about you as a member of the House of Representatives, Senate, the Governor’s office, or the office of the Mayor. You are all our representatives. This is about the people! Lest we forget, this period called “Lame Duck” is named for a reason. The lame duck can’t function. Legislators, you are not ducks. You are our representatives elected to do a job. Power means nothing if you don’t exercise it. Leaving bills stacked on the table when they should be voted on, passed, and signed into law is your job undone. You left the people hanging on a voting tree where their hopes and needs remain dangling in the winds of irrelevancy. Well the people are relevant, and our interests will be heard.

My grandmother had a house rule, *“Don’t leave the table until you finish eating everything on your plate.”* Members of the legislative body and others in power, you left the Voting Rights Act, police accountability and reform, Black maternal health care, election misinformation, charter school reform, gun reform, minimum wage and sick leave, and certainly long-term road funding, naming only a few still on the table. This is shameful! It is a case of political malpractice. If you don’t get it right in Lansing, how can you get it right in Detroit or any other city when you have such a key opportunity? It is not the “Ego”. It is the “We Go”. Do your job for the people, not for any individual. Do not allow this period to be known as one of the worst examples of the non-use of political power in Michigan’s history while you had the watch.

Next year is a whole new political game. We already know the obstacles that lie ahead. The implementation of Project 2025 to end public education, eliminate unions, increase voter suppression and reduce civil rights, and the ultimate elimination of national healthcare. Kash Patel was nominated to head the FBI, Harmeet Dhillon as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Robert F. Kennedy to head the Department of Health and Human Services, and Pamela Bondi as Attorney General. The calvary is not coming to rescue us here in Michigan. We must therefore rescue ourselves. Get it done now. The situation in Lansing should not have come to the end of the year with time running out before the mission was accomplished. We have failed the people not accidentally but intentionally. One has to ask the question based on the battle to achieve the right to vote and elect our representatives, was Medgar Evers shot down in his driveway fighting for our right to vote a mistake? Was Fannie Lou Hamer almost beat to death in a Mississippi jail for registering folks to vote a joke? Was John Lewis bludgeoned in the head as he tried to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma just a whim? Was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shot down on a balcony in Memphis,

Tennessee, while standing up for the rights of sanitation workers who could not vote in a union for nothing? Did Barack Obama run on the platform "Yes We Can" becoming the 44th President of the United States for our leaders to now say, No We Can't? Did Kamala Harris run on a position of Freedom and Democracy for some leaders to now stand on individualism and hypocrisy? Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "*Voting is the foundation stone for political action.*" Well, the people will remember those who are supposed to lead us retreating into no action. It's a shame. It's really a shame that we find our people in such a state of affairs. In a final plea before the year ends, we respectfully call upon Speaker of the House Joe Tate and Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks to exercise their power and call the House back to session per Joint Rule 15. This is obviously an extraordinary occasion. This is a new and different experience. Perhaps it's time for Governor Whitmer to exercise Article 5 Section 15 under the State Constitution to convene the legislature in order to address this crisis. You still have time to help save Michigan's future. As we approach the national holiday of Martin Luther King, Jr., let us not forget, "*The time is always right to do what is right.*"

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