



A Hundred Percent of Nothing

JoAnn Watson, Detroit city council member, said, "Our people in an overwhelming way supported the re-election of this president, and there ought to be a quid pro quo." In other words, President Obama should send the nearly bankrupted city of Detroit millions in taxpayer bailout money. But there's a painful lesson to be learned from decades of political hustling and counsel by intellectuals and urban experts.



In 1960, Detroit's population was 1.6 million. Blacks were 29 percent, and whites were 70 percent. Today, Detroit's population has fallen precipitously to 707,000, of which blacks are 84 percent and whites 8 percent. Much of the city's decline began with the election of Coleman Young, Detroit's first black mayor and mayor for five terms, who engaged in political favoritism to blacks and tax policies against higher income mostly white people. Young's successors, Dennis Archer and Kwame Kilpatrick, followed his Third World tyrant policies, but neither had his verbal vulgarity. Kilpatrick (2002-2008) went to jail and is on trial today on charges of corruption. Mayor David Bing is making an effort to revive Detroit. His problem is that he's not God.

Policies that ran whites and other more affluent people out of Detroit might have been Young's and his successors' strategy. After all, why not get rid of people who aren't going to vote for you anyway? The problem is that getting rid of these people left Detroit with a lower tax base, fewer jobs and fewer consumers. Fewer whites might be good for the careers of black politicians, but it's not in the best interests of ordinary blacks. Blacks have political control of Detroit, but the relevant question is whether some control of something is better than 100 percent control of nothing. By most measures, Detroit is one of the nation's most tragic cities, and it's mostly self-imposed.

Detroit topped Forbes magazine's 2010 list of America's Most Dangerous Cities. That year there were 345 homicides, but that's going to be topped with this year's 365 homicides so far. Most homicide victims in Detroit and elsewhere are black, and 95 percent of the time their murderers are black. But far more important to black leaders and white liberals than blacks murdering blacks are charges of police misconduct and racial profiling.

Detroit's predominantly black public schools are close to being the worst in the nation, perhaps with the



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exception of those of Washington, D.C. Only 4 percent of Detroit's eighth-graders scored proficient or above on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test, sometimes called "The Nation's Report Card." Thirty-six percent scored basic, and 57 percent below basic. "Below basic" is when a student is unable to demonstrate even partial mastery of knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at their grade level. "Basic" indicates only partial mastery.

Unbeknownst to most black parents is the fact that most black students who manage to graduate from high school cannot read and compute any better than whites four years younger and still in junior high school. Here's a question for you: If we put a group of 100 students of any race having an eighth-grade level of proficiency and another group of 100 students of any race with a 12th-grade level of proficiency in college, is it reasonable to expect the first group to perform as well as the second? On top of that, is it reasonable to expect a student of any race to be able to make up 12 years of fraudulent K-12 education in the space of four or five years of college?

Detroit's social pathology is seen in other cities with large black populations such as Philadelphia, Newark, Baltimore and Chicago. These are cities where blacks have for years dominated the political machinery in the forms of mayors, police chiefs, superintendents of schools and city councilmen, plus they've been Democrats. It's safe to conclude that the focus on political power doesn't do much for ordinary blacks.

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