



“We Are Being Shut Out of Our Communities!”

A US Human Rights Network Report

from the

Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal

August 24-25, 2012

Prepared by

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights

*This report is dedicated to the people of Detroit, Michigan,
who have undertaken the defense of their human rights
by working tirelessly to heal people and restore communities
harmed by injustice.*

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Overview

Thirty-one social justice organizations based in Detroit, Michigan, participated in the US Human Rights Network’s *Detroit Human Rights Training and Tribunal* on August 24 - 25, 2012. Planning for the human rights forum was overseen by a steering committee of Detroit advocates representing the organizations Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, Green Door Initiative, Human Synergy Works, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, and the Detroit Chapter of the Sierra Club, all of which co-sponsored the human rights forum. Additional co-sponsor organizations were Advocates for Environmental Human Rights, Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, Corktown Restorative Justice Center, the Michigan Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and the Sugar Law Center. (See Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal Program Agenda, Appendix A.)

The title of this report comes from the testimony of a Detroit advocate who participated in the Detroit Human Rights Tribunal. It represents a recurring theme in all of the testimonies presented by Detroit advocates at the Tribunal as well as in their responses to the information presented at the Human Rights Training. Being denied participation in city and school policies and programs, forced out of neighborhoods by major private developments that create environmental and public health hazards, and cut off from police and fire protection as well as other basic municipal services are just some of the ways that Detroiters are being displaced from their communities. However, Detroit’s social justice advocacy organizations are fighting back with strategies for healing the people and restoring the

communities harmed by unjust laws and policies. Their strategies center on winning rights through community organizing.

The purpose of this report is to support Detroit advocates in defending their communities by holding local, state, and federal governments accountable to human rights standards. The report comprises three sections and several appendices of materials provided at the Detroit Human Rights Training and Tribunal. Section one summarizes the topics presented at the Detroit Human Rights Training. Section two documents the testimonies presented at the Detroit Human Rights Tribunal. Section three introduces the vision and work of the US Human Rights Network.

Section One
Human Rights Training: The Rights We Are Fighting For

The Detroit Human Rights Training began with connecting human rights to social justice struggles taking place locally and globally. (See Detroit Human Rights Training materials, Appendices B - I.) Participants in the training session identified the following rights that they are fighting to win in Detroit. These rights are listed in the table below along with the corresponding text of key human rights laws that protect these rights.

The Rights We Are Fighting For	Human Rights Laws That Protect These Rights
<p>The right to a remedy for discrimination and unequal protection</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 6: “States Parties shall assure to everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies, through the competent national tribunals and other State institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination which violate his human rights and fundamental freedoms contrary to this Convention, as well as the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination.”</p> <p>Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2(1): “Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. . . . Article 2(3): Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes: (a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity; (b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative</p>

	<p>authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy; (c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.”</p>
<p>The right to a decent standard of living</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . (i) the rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favorable remuneration; (ii) the right to form and join trade unions; (iii) the right to housing; (iv) the right to public health, medical care, social security and social services; (v) the right to education and training. . . .”</p> <p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XIV: “Every person has the right to work, under proper conditions, and to follow his vocation freely, insofar as existing conditions of employment permit. Every person who works has the right to receive such remuneration as will, in proportion to his capacity and skill, assure him a standard of living suitable for himself and for his family.” Article XVI: “Every person has the right to social security which will protect him from the consequences of unemployment, old age, and any disabilities arising from causes beyond his control that make it physically or mentally impossible for him to earn a living.”</p>
<p>The right to clean air, water, and land</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(iv): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . the right to public health. . . .”</p> <p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XI. “Every person has the right to the preservation of his health. . . .”</p>
<p>The right to be free from toxic pollution and corporate oppression</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(iv): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . the right to public health. . . .”</p> <p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XI: “Every person has the right to the preservation of his health. . . .” Article XXIX: “It is the duty of the individual so to conduct himself in relation to others that each and every one may fully form and develop his personality.” Article XXXV: It is the duty of every person to cooperate with the state and the community with respect to social security and welfare. . . .”</p>
<p>The right to quality education</p>	<p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XII: “Every person has the right to an education, which should be based on the principles of liberty, morality and human solidarity. Likewise every person has the right to an education that will prepare him to attain a decent life, to raise his standard of living, and to be a useful member of society. The right to an education includes the right to equality of opportunity in every case, in accordance with natural talents, merit and the desire to utilize the resources that the state or the community is in a position to provide. Every person has the right to receive, free, at least a primary education.”</p> <p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(v): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . the right to education and training. . . .”</p>

<p>The right to universal health care</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(iv): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . (iv) the right to . . . medical care. . . .”</p> <p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XI: “Every person has the right to the preservation of his health through sanitary and social measures relating to . . . medical care, to the extent permitted by public and community resources.”</p>
<p>The right to a healthy mind, body and spirit that includes restoration and healing for the individual as part of a community</p>	<p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XI: “Every person has the right to the preservation of his health. . . .” Article XIII: “Every person has the right to take part in the cultural life of the community. . . .”</p> <p>Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”</p>
<p>The right to having a say in decisions affecting my community and my way of life</p>	<p>American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XX: “Every person having legal capacity is entitled to participate in the government of his country, directly or through his representatives. . . .”</p> <p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(c): “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . the right to . . . take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service.”</p> <p>Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 25(a): “Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: [t]o take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. . . .”</p>

Participants discussed how these rights are also being fought for around the world and examined how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into existence.

The trainers provided an overview of key historical developments that have shaped the human rights framework and how these moments in history offer important insights into the recognition of a right as the product of a power struggle. With each struggle, rights can be won or lost.

Applying this concept of rights as the product of a power struggle helps one to understand the role of human rights in America today. The trainers described the power struggle taking place in the United States, both domestically and internationally, during the post-World War II era. At the center of this power struggle were the scope of authority to be wielded by the nascent United Nations in

protecting human rights around the world and, in particular, the effect of the human rights framework to dismantle racism and ensure racial equality in the United States. The outcomes of this power struggle included establishing the United Nations with limited authority to ensure human rights and suppressing efforts to apply the human rights framework to prohibit racial discrimination and other injustices within the United States.

As a result of this past power struggle, human rights education and advocacy are not part of the American zeitgeist and the prevailing American view of human rights is as an international or foreign matter. Additionally, there is no federal statute pertaining to voting, criminal justice, employment, education, housing, environmental protection, public health and safety, or any other domestic matter that articulates the promotion of human rights or the prohibition of a human rights violation. So great is the suppression of human rights awareness in the United States that most Americans cannot name one human rights law that is legally binding on our government.

The trainers presented case studies of human rights advocacy in the United States that are part of an emerging human rights movement in this country. The case studies highlight how advocates are using domestic and international accountability mechanisms to hold governmental officials and offices accountable to human rights standards. Among these standards are the following human rights laws that are legally binding on the United States:

- American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (legally binding on the U.S. as a member of Organization of American States since 1948),
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (legally binding on the U.S. through ratification in 1992),
- Convention Against Torture (legally binding on the U.S. through ratification in 1994), and the

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (legally binding on the U.S. through ratification in 1994).

This session emphasized that effective human rights advocacy requires us to take on the duty of enforcement.

The training concluded with a small group exercise that focused on how participants can enforce the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by participating in the US Human Rights Network's National Plan of Action for Racial Justice.

Section Two

Human Rights Tribunal: Violating Human Rights a Matter of Governmental Law and Policy

Social justice advocates in Detroit described their experiences with human rights violations to a panel of human rights experts representing the US Human Rights Network. The testimonies of Detroit advocates substantiate that human rights violations are occurring as a result of governmental laws and policies that subject the predominantly people of color residents in the Detroit area to anti-democratic authoritarian regimes for privatizing public schools, public utilities, and other public resources; police harassment; the development of hazardous facilities; and reduced or eliminated public safety and municipal services. At the tribunal, Detroit residents recounted governmental disregard for police protection in people of color neighborhoods that has given rise to the kidnapping and murders of African American women, children, and LGBT persons.

Governmental laws and policies are detailed in the testimonies as extinguishing individual and community decision-making power and the right of self-determination in:

- the management of public schools and municipal services in the Detroit area, which a state law has placed under the control of emergency managers;

- the review and assessment of proposals for a new international bridge that would significantly increase air pollution and displace residents of Delray, the most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood in Detroit; and
- the management of Detroit’s public water utility, which a local compact would place under the control of a private company; and the management of the nearby Highland Park’s water utility which is now under private control with deplorable results.

According to the testimonies, governmental law and policy are also abusing the economic, cultural, and social rights in people of color neighborhoods in the Detroit area that:

- are targeted as the dumping grounds for toxic industrial pollution through environmental permitting;
- are marked with an “X” designating the termination of municipal services;
- are blighted as a result of banks that keep foreclosed homes vacant rather than lived in and repaired; and
- are being gentrified with brutal police harassment that targets African Americans and Latinos for expulsion from the area.

Taken all together, one advocate simply declared, “We are being shut out of our community!”

Detroit advocates recognize that organizing in defense of their communities is about protecting their human rights. Their testimonies provide organizing successes and lessons learned through galvanized efforts by people to defend their rights. For example, advocates participating in the Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal helped to organize a referendum on the Emergency Management Act, a state law that gives the Governor authority to appoint emergency managers to take over cities and school districts. A few weeks prior to the Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal, the advocates prevailed in a Michigan Supreme Court decision rejecting the claim by governmental officials that the

signed voter petitions were invalid and ruling that the referendum be placed on the November 2012 election ballot. At the time this report was being prepared, the Michigan election results showed that an overwhelming majority of voters rejected the Emergency Management Act. In another example, advocates have organized people in need of homes to defend their human right to housing by occupying abandoned homes and advocating for an ordinance that would allow a person or family in need of a home to become the owner of an abandoned home that they renovate. Additionally, advocates have also formed a coalition to develop a statewide environmental justice policy that was adopted by the former Governor Granholm and are now working to overcome the reversals to this policy made by the current Governor Snyder.

The table below presents highlights from a selection of the testimonies provided at the Detroit Human Rights Tribunal along with the corresponding human right at issue in each testimony and the legally binding human rights law that protects this right in the United States.

The Human Right	The Law that Requires the United States to Protect the Human Right	Tribunal Testimony of the Governmental Action that Violates the Human Right
Human right to racial equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, Article II Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 26 	<p>Marian Kramer: <i>We are being shut out of our community! The reduction of security is a major concern. We have “virtual police” because after 3:00 pm in Highland Park, a predominantly African American city next to Detroit, the police station is closed. There is limited access to the police by phone and in-person. If you have a problem that you need the police to help with, you have to either write it down on paper and place the paper in a slot on the door of the station or wait for a long time on the phone. A battered African American woman was turned away by the police and was killed hours later by her husband. The corpses of African American women and children are found in abandoned fields. Some African American women have had to police their own neighborhood.</i></p>
Human right to security of person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, Article I Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(b) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(1) 	<p><i>Delray was once a thriving place and one of the few that has racial and ethnic diversity in the Detroit area. Today, Delray residents are constantly harassed by ICE raids.</i></p>
Human right to protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution	<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(b)</p>	<p>Rhonda Anderson: <i>Blacks and Latinos are being pushed out of the midtown area of Detroit, while white tourists, white residents, and white-owned businesses are being drawn to the area. There are several police forces operating in midtown from the city, county, state, Wayne State University, VA Hospital, Immigration Customs and Enforcement (“ICE”), and the U.S. Coast Guard that act like the Gestapo in arresting and intimidating Blacks and Latinos. But, the police look the other way as white people drink beer in the street as they go to and from the Detroit Tigers Stadium in midtown.</i></p> <p>Jose Cuello: <i>The police providing security for Wayne State University are employed by the Detroit Police Department. They are Detroit police, but they are controlled by the university. Having a highly visible and active police force all to itself was important to university leaders who promote their midtown campus as being safer than the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The Detroit Police Department is one of about 10 police forces in midtown Detroit that include the VA Hospital police and police for other hospitals in the area. All of these police forces harass Blacks and Latinos in the area in order to help the university, the hospitals, and developers recruit white health professionals and attract white people to live in new condos and other planned residential developments in midtown Detroit.</i></p>

		<p><i>Siwatu Salaama Ra: There is no relationship between police protection and my community. No police would come to my community to assist me or my neighbors. The violence against women is very scary to me. Two of my friends, Abria Brown age 19 and Ashley Connor age 21, were missing for three weeks and were later found murdered and buried in shallow graves. The murderer was a boyfriend to one of them. No one talks about them. No one talks about the woman whose body was burned and left in the trunk of a car. The police did little to investigate these murders and now these women are forgotten. I saw a woman who begged me not to let her die pass away in front of me. The ambulance did not come for her, so I took her to the hospital where she later died. The ambulance did not arrive until three hours later. From January to March 2012, 146 Black women in the Detroit area were killed.</i></p> <p><i>Cynthia Thornton: I worked for the Michigan Department of Corrections from 1987-1997 and 2008 to present. Under past Michigan Governors Blanchard and Engler, prisoners were released because the state was out of money. You cannot release felons without an effective support system that provides them with a decent living and prepares them for it. Instead, the Governors put them in oppressed communities with little or no resources to handle their needs for jobs, education, and re-entry services. The Governors' decision is part of the national trend to close down prisons because of dwindling revenues, which means putting violent men and sex offenders back on the street where there are few if any good options.</i></p> <p><i>The victimization and killing of people in the LGBTQ community is being ignored like the missing and murdered Black women and children. Shelley Hilliard, a 19 year-old transgendered woman, was beheaded.</i></p> <p><i>The success of placing the law on the emergency manager take-over on the ballot for voters to decide should motivate all of us to continue to work against injustice even if it is against those in our community who prey on us.</i></p>
<p>Human right to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XX • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(c) • International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 25(a) 	<p><i>General Baker: We organized a voter petition drive across the state for a referendum on Public Act 4 of 2011, the Emergency Management law. For the November 2012 election, we want the voters to decide whether to accept or repeal the law that allows the Governor to declare a city or school district to be financially distressed and appoint an emergency manager to take over all aspects of the financial management of the city or school</i></p>

<p>Human right to self-determination</p>	<p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 1(1)</p>	<p>[General Baker, contd.] <i>district including contracts and collective bargaining agreements. U.S. Rep. John Conyers issued the report, <u>Democracy for Sale</u>, which finds that the emergency management is unconstitutional. Michigan officials tried to block our petition from getting on the ballot claiming to courts that the font size of the words typed on the petition made the petitions invalid. We had to go all the way to the State Supreme Court to get a ruling that validated our petitions. Although we won, this lawsuit has cost us time and resources that should have gone into educating voters.</i></p> <p>Scott Brines: <i>I live in the Delray neighborhood in southwest Detroit. Delray residents are organized and demanding that there be no new international bridge without first cleaning up the air and providing other community benefits, but we are being ignored. Two competing bridge projects would worsen air pollution with increased diesel truck traffic. One is by Gov. Snyder, who plans to build the bridge without the approval of the state legislature or the voters. The other is by Manuel (Matty) Moroun, who owns the Ambassador Bridge in Delray that connects Detroit to Windsor, Canada, and wants to build a new bridge to Canada about two miles away from the Ambassador Bridge. Delray residents worked on a voter petition drive to place the bridge proposal to a vote, but Moroun sued to stop the petition drive.</i></p> <p>Patrick Geans-Ali: <i>The Consent Agreement – a stop gap measure – entered into between Detroit Mayor Bing and the Detroit City Council allows for the privatization of the city water utility in violation of the Home Rule Charter of Detroit and the privatization of Bell Isle, a beautiful recreational spot in Detroit. The goal here is to privatize and take away from us the critical parts of public utilities, infrastructure, and services that voters have the right to manage and set policy for either directly or through the people we elect to represent us. Once the voter petition is approved by the State Supreme Court, this local consent agreement will be suspended along with the state Emergency Management law.</i></p>
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<p>Human right to health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XI • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(iv) 	<p>Donele Wilkins: <i>Racial segregation and environmental racism are here in Michigan, where 87% of the polluting facilities in the state are in Wayne County, and most African Americans living in Wayne County reside in Detroit. This is environmental racism. The auto industry has left behind some 40,000 contaminated sites. There is no federal, state or local law that requires a safe distance or buffer between industry and neighborhoods.</i></p>
<p>Human right to inviolability of the home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article IX 	<p><i>I am concerned about the social issues produced from high lead exposures that can cause severe behavioral problems and violent acts. Because of the lead contamination in Black neighborhoods, Black children have more lead in their bodies than children of other races.</i></p> <p><i>Under the previous administration of Governor Jennifer Granholm, we were able to develop a statewide environmental justice policy that is premised on the Precautionary Principle as well as secure a permit moratorium on the proposed bridge project that would increase pollution from truck traffic in Delray, a racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood in Detroit. But Governor Snyder has reversed these policies.</i></p> <p>Vincent Martin: <i>The African American neighborhood in Detroit with the 48217 zip code is burdened with lots of heavy industry. Residents live next to the Marathon Oil Refinery, steel facilities, and a gypsum factory. I'm concerned about cancer and respiratory illnesses that have taken the lives of my high school classmates and other people who live here. Neurological development of children is a concern with toxic pollution impairing normal development.</i></p> <p>Simone Sagovac: <i>The Delray neighborhood in southwest Detroit is surrounded by lots of industrial facilities that are close to homes and a playground. The industrial odors and poor health related to the industrial pollution keep us inside our homes. Detroit has a hospital emergency room rate for asthma attacks that is three times higher than the state average. Delray has a cancer mortality rate that is 10 times higher than the state for exposure to particulate matter, which is the fine soot particles released from the diesel trucks and the industrial facilities in our neighborhood.</i></p> <p><i>Environmental permitting laws do not set any cap on the aggregate pollution from multiple facilities and zoning laws do not require safe distances between homes and an industrial facility, which means that you can have one facility permitted to pollute your neighborhood or 20 facilities,</i></p>

[Simone Sagovac, contd.] *it doesn't matter. Our concerns about air pollution are summarily dismissed in environmental assessment reports that just say in one sentence: "Air quality will improve." Our human right to health and leisure and other rights can be protected by reducing the pollution in our neighborhood and city. In Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, there are programs known as "Green Port" and "Green Trucks" that have reduced particulate emissions from the trucks and vessels by 80-90%.*

Scott Brines: *My neighborhood of Delray is facing two proposed bridge projects that involve razing the homes of Delray residents to make space for the new bridge. There are two steel mills, a major rail yard, the Marathon oil refinery, and other industrial developments in Delray. The plans for the international bridge would compound the injustice of clustered transportation hubs and industrial facilities in and near Delray. Delray suffers from bad air quality from heavy truck traffic which would increase with new bridge traffic. Delray has been out of attainment with ambient air quality standards for years. There are high asthma rates among residents. The community wants an ongoing study of the impacts of vehicular emissions on our health.*

Delray residents are organized and demanding a community benefits agreement on the bridge project. The Governor has publicly stated that he favors community benefits but has taken no action. The community benefits process would identify adverse impacts of the bridge proposal and set terms for avoiding or at least mitigating these impacts. Proponents of the bridge project claim that there would be no adverse impacts, which is not true. The Delray neighborhood is demanding that there be no additional international bridge without cleaning up the air and providing other benefits that have been specified.

Marian Kramer: *The water system in my town of Highland Park near Detroit has been taken over by a private company with a 99-year lease. The company does not maintain the infrastructure and the sewage back-ups are routine, which creates a lot of problems including pest infestation. We have no safeguards set up to prevent exposure to pollutants released by the Ford assembly plant that is near homes.*

		Doris LaBordeaux: <i>It's documented that there have been as many as 40,000 homes in Detroit cut-off from municipal water service. I have been in this situation and can tell you that when it happens there is no advance notice or assistance with getting your water service turned on again.</i>
Human right to form and join trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XXII • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(e)(ii) • International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 22(1) 	Sheila Jackson-Carter: <i>Economic injustice is a problem for everyone. Michigan is being targeted for at-will employment policies to weaken the labor unions.</i>
Human right to education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, Article XII • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 5(e)(v) 	<p>Rhonda Anderson: <i>We are seeing charter schools replace our public schools and apply selective admissions to keep out many Black and Latino children and push them into newly created schools for so-called "slow learners."</i></p> <p>Doris LaBordeaux: <i>I visited a charter school in Detroit that teaches kids with a big screen television that shows lessons from a DVD or a website. The kids are not taught by a teacher. The kids must go through metal detectors with armed guards to get to a classroom. It's like a prison.</i></p> <p>Elena Herrada: <i>All of the schools with majority African American students have been placed under emergency management by the Educational Achievement Authority ("EAA"). The EAA is a statewide authority focused on taking over so-called "failing schools." However, the EAA has only taken over the public schools located in the Detroit area, which is a small part of Michigan. The EAA cherry picks the cities, school districts, and individual schools it takes over. For example, a predominantly Latino/a public school in the Detroit area has been placed under emergency management but not the predominantly white school district in which this school is located.</i></p> <p><i>We are in a struggle over the authority of the EAA to take over our public schools. This struggle extends to whether the Michigan State Attorney General can serve on the Detroit Public School Board ("DPSB") when he was not voted onto the DPSB by voters of a school district. The Attorney General is on the DPSB to influence members to support the emergency managers.</i></p> <p><i>The EAA hires teachers from the group, Teach for America, who are almost all white, have little or no classroom experience, and work for only two years. How is this preparing our kids for academic achievement?</i></p> <p><i>We also have to overcome the corrupting influence of the EAA which</i></p>

[Elena Herrada, contd.] *doles out dollars to faith-based groups and others with influence especially in the non-profit sector. These groups then become spokespersons in support of emergency management taking over public schools, and their support weakens opposition for public education. We tell parents: don't put your kids in EAA schools. This is hard for struggling parents to follow because the DPSB does not have buses, but the EAA does and also provides breakfast, lunch, and dinner to recruit students. The EAA funds don't come from some private source. The EAA funds come from the Detroit Public Schools System. With these dollars, the EAA schools are preparing our kids for prison.*

Annebelle Duncan: *The Detroit Public School Board ("DPSB") is ignoring parents and teachers who want educational services for deaf students. DPSB has evicted students from the Detroit Day School for the Deaf. The school has been cleared out. There are no desks and chairs in the classrooms. Channel 7 News reported that new text books for the deaf students were put in dumpsters a few days ago. The community is fighting this. Parents of deaf students are planning to send their kids here on the first day of school. The DPSB has always wanted to shut down the school for the deaf and use it for something else. Parents and the community have always struggled to keep the school open each year. I have parents who are deaf and I care about the education of deaf children.*

General Baker: *Public Act 4 (a Michigan law) allows the Governor to declare a city or school district financially distressed and appoint an emergency manager to take over all aspects of the financial management of the city or school district including contracts and collective bargaining agreements. In the summer of 2012, two public elementary schools and one public high school attended by a total of 900 students in Highland Park, near Detroit, were taken over by an emergency manager who has privatized these schools. The takeover of our public schools has created a lot of confusion. We are told by Gov. Snyder and city leaders that there is no money left to run the schools. But if that is true, how can they afford to re-open the schools the day after Labor Day 2012? I received a tax bill for six mills to pay for improvements at the schools, but the tax money will go to schools that have been privatized.*

		<p>Jose Cuello: <i>In the past, 75% of Wayne State University (WSU) funding came from the State of Michigan and 25% came from tuition and school fees paid by students. Today, it's the reverse with Gov. Snyder wanting to give even less money if the graduation rates at WSU do not rise. WSU was focused on developing students regardless of their academic abilities and achievements, but with the mandate from Gov. Snyder, WSU is now focused on drawing students who are more likely to graduate on time. WSU's new admission policy has reduced Black and Latino enrollment. Before the admission policy changed, roughly 31% of the WSU student body was Black; now it's down to about half of that at 17.</i></p>
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The Detroit Human Rights Tribunal was observed by a panel of human rights experts who concluded the tribunal by thanking those who provided testimonies. Members of the panel remarked how the testimonies conveyed the spirit and passion of advocates to find solutions that heal and restore human dignity. They recommended that the report of the Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal highlight the text of the human rights laws which supports the social justice advocacy taking place in the Detroit area. There was agreement among the panel and participants for the US Human Rights Network to arrange a follow-up session in which the opportunities and strategies for holding government accountable to human rights standards and organizing a demand for human rights protection and remedies would be shared and explored.

Section Three *About the US Human Rights Network*

The US Human Rights Network (USHRN) is a progressive national network of organizations and individuals uniquely situated to grow and strengthen the emerging human rights movement and culture within the United States. Presently, the Network is comprised of over 300 member organizations and 1,500 individual members from across the US and is growing fast. Network members are working on fundamental human rights issues such as criminal justice, health care, immigration, housing, labor, education, reproductive justice, internal displacement, and discrimination based on race, class, sex, ethnicity, immigration status, language, ability, sexuality, age, gender identity, and expression.

USHRN envisions a people-centered human rights movement where leadership is centered on those most directly affected by human rights violations, where participatory democracy and anti-oppression principles are understood and put into practice, and where the full range of diversity within communities is respected and embraced.

USHRN believes that the human rights framework has the potential to be a transformative tool when put to use by grassroots communities and movements to achieve fundamental social change, to build bridges between organizations, communities, and movement, and to bring the US in line with global human rights standards.

For more information about the US Human Rights Network, visit www.ushrnetwork.org.

Appendices

- Detroit Human Rights Training & Tribunal Program Agenda Appendix A
- US Human Rights Network, Human Rights 101 Training Presentation Appendix B
- Advocates for Environmental Human Rights, Human Rights Laws in the United States Appendix C
- Summary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Appendix D
- US Human Rights Network, The CERD Treaty and Civil Rights Law Appendix E
- US Human Rights Network, National Plan of Action for Racial Justice Fact Sheet Appendix F
- US State Department, Memorandum for State Governors: U.S. Human Rights Treaty Reports, January 20, 2010 Appendix G
- US State Department, Universal Periodic Review Process: United States Implementation of Accepted Recommendations Appendix H
- Advocates for Environmental Human Rights, Environmental Justice & Human Rights Appendix I