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Telford Telescope: Save our schools; Oust Trump and DeVos!

By Dr. John Telford
SUN COLUMNIST



In 1999, the DeVos family bank-rolled our state's Republican governor and legislature to take over Detroit's public schools. Those Lansing officials then dissolved our elected DPS board and replaced the DPS administration with appointees who briskly set

about removing any vestige of our city's proud democratic history.

The state's appointed DPS emergency managers changed the names of schools like Finney High that memorialized a Detroit family of ABOLITIONISTS. They removed the sign with the words 'John Telford Track' from the Finney track site and demolished the school, replacing it with a newly-built one they named "East English Village."

In 1964, I had become the then-fledgling high school's first-ever track coach after having gone undefeated sprinting on the U.S. team in Europe and then having coached champions for three years at Southeastern. Ironically, the new school isn't even IN East English Village, and very few residents of EEV attend the school now bearing the EEV name, nor do they represent it on the track which ostensibly still bears MY name (even though that 'John Telford Track' sign is long gone--see the photo of me standing beside it with my old Finney track star Ken Howse after the 2003 track-naming ceremony). Lansing's DPS appointees tore down and rebuilt three of the city's better high schools, tore down others out in the neighborhoods, sold another, and let many more decay. They did nothing to oppose the encroachment of a hundred vastly inferior charter schools in the city, and they colluded in a second Republican governor's commandeering fifteen DPS schools that then became a quasi-district euphemistically dubbed the Educational "Achievement" Authority. Those EAA schools ultimately failed dismally and were returned in neglectful disrepair to DPS. In 1999, DPS students' test scores had been at the state midpoint, and the school district had enjoyed a \$125-million surplus. During the two-decade-long state takeover, that \$125 million--plus an additional \$3.5 BILLION--was squandered

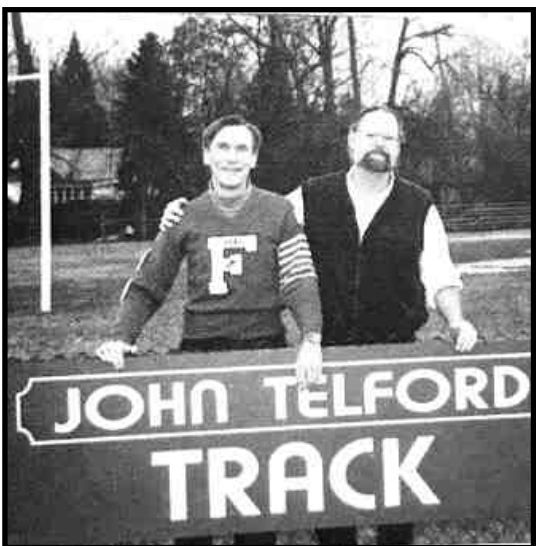
and stolen. Now re-named 'Detroit Public Schools Community District', the short-funded "new" district has inherited student test-scores from the takeover that became America's lowest, and its SAT scores declined further this year.

Prospects for the majority of DPSCD students appear bleak, with Democratic governor Gretchen Whitmer facing a Republican-dominated legislature, with the addled Betsy DeVos serving as Trump's secretary of education, and with the racist Trump supporting her cuts to traditional public education in predominately black-and-brown-populated districts. This pathologically narcissistic, mendacious, Neo-Fascist false president has broken our country's word on a nuclear treaty with

Iran, allowed thousands of hurricane victims to die in Puerto Rico, refused to grant Bahamian refugees temporary protected status, put Hispanic refugee children in cages, weakened our alliance with western Europe, fomented a ruinous trade war with China, and cozied up to murderously treacherous oligarchs in North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere--plus one in Russia who helped

him cheat to get fraudulently elected in 2016 and will try it again in 2020. Donald Trump seeks to destroy Social Security and health care, he has fostered egregious tax breaks for the rich while illegally enriching himself, he has now tried to extort the Ukrainian president, and he has committed an additional blizzard of sexual, corporate, and borderline-treasonous offenses too multitudinous to add here--not to mention his having disavowed the deadly-real and immediate threats of domestic terrorism, mass shootings, and global warming. Detroit--along with the rest of the world--is in dire danger with this amoral, anti-American buffoon. We've got to get him out of the White House post-haste--preferably in time even faster than my 46-second quarter-mile races for Wayne State and America in the 1950s.

Former DPS Superintendent John Telford, a one-time world-ranked sprinter, now serves as DPSCD Poet-in-Residence. His Detroit-oriented books can be ordered in stores or on amazon.com (type in Dr. John Telford). Hear him Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on WCHB AM1340, also streaming on Detroit Internet Television (DETIPV.com). contact him at DrJohnTelfordEd@aol.com or (313) 460-8272 for signed copies of his books. His website is www.AlifeontheRUN.com. Friend him on Facebook.



Detroit building official convicted of bulldozing demolition program

By Janae' Miller
SUN STAFF WRITER

A City of Detroit Building Authority official was recently convicted of conspiracy to commit bribery and fraud with the Demolition Program and was sentenced to 1 year in prison followed by 2 years probation and a \$5,000 fine.

Aradondo Haskins, a former Field Operations Manager, pled guilty to accepting \$26,000 in bribes in exchange for giving a competitive contractor information to help him to win a demolition bid from January 2013 to April 2015. Haskins also worked at Adamo Group, a private demolition firm, as an estimator that required him to put together bid packages in response to Requests for Proposals (RFP) put out by the City of Detroit.

Confidential information was given to one of the contractors by Haskins to win the bid.

"The City of Detroit and its demolition program were entrusted with millions of taxpayer dollars to tear down abandoned houses in Detroit's neighborhoods," First Assistant U.S. Attorney Saima Mohsin, said. "The corruption of the government contracting process by Aradondo Haskins damaged the integrity of the demolition program and broke the public trust. This prosecution serves as a warning to public officials that soliciting or accepting bribes will be punished and as a promise to the taxpaying public that such violations of the public trust will not be tolerated."

The Blight Elimination Program was created by the U.S. Treasury Department

and was financed through the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF). About \$258,656,459 has been given to Detroit since Oct. 7, 2013 to tear down blighted homes.

"Anti-competitive corruption by city officials that award contracts in the Hardest Hit Fund's Blight Elimination Program will be met by justice and accountability," Special Inspector General Christy Goldsmith Romero said. "Defendant Haskins started taking bribes from subcontractors when he worked for lead contractor Adamo and continued his crimes as a city official. I commend U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider and Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust Makan Delrahim for standing united with SIGTARP in fighting corruption in this TARP program."

Haskins also turned over the funds he received from bribes.

"Mr. Haskins was sentenced for corrupting the bidding process both while he was seeking contracts through a federally-funded program and after he became a City of Detroit employee," Steven M D'Antuono, special agent in charge, said. "The FBI's Detroit Area Public Corruption Task Force will continue to investigate and fight corruption by those who give illegal, preferential treatment at the expense of honest American business. I would encourage anyone with information about potential public corruption in Michigan to contact FBI Detroit's Public Corruption tipline at 313-965-2222 or our main number at 313-965-2323."

Nessel opposes proposed federal rule that would deprive 144,000 Michiganders of food assistance

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel last month joined 23 other Attorneys General to oppose the federal government's proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that would strip away benefits from 144,188 individuals in 79,901 Michigan households.

The Attorneys General filed a comment letter against the rule proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would end states' ability to set rules for SNAP eligibility based on the unique needs of their communities. The letter argues that the rule would violate federal law and harm the states, their residents, their local economies, and public health.

"This proposed rule is entirely unacceptable and exhibits a blatant disregard for more than 10 percent of SNAP recipients in Michigan," said Nessel. "I am horrified that the federal government feels comfortable not only in depriving adults of the essential assistance needed to put food on their tables, but also denying 58,743 Michigan children from eating lunch at school and consequently impacting their ability to learn."

The USDA's proposed rule - "Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" - would affect the SNAP program, the country's most important anti-hunger program referred to as "food stamps." The program provides residents with limited incomes access to nutritious food they otherwise would not have. SNAP is a crucial component of federal and state efforts to help lift people out of poverty.

Based on federal guidelines, each state designs its own process for how low-income residents apply for SNAP benefits. The states must track whether participants meet the income and asset requirements for the program on a monthly basis.

The federal government's proposed rule would eliminate a long-standing policy known as "broad based categorical eligibility" (BBCE). BBCE allows states to consider local economic factors like high

costs of living or costs of childcare when determining eligibility for SNAP. It also allows states to adopt less restrictive asset limits so that families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities can attempt to save money without losing food aid. BBCE is used by 39 states including Michigan, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Attorneys General argue in their comment letter that the proposed rule harms the states by:

Taking food assistance away from 3.1 million vulnerable people: If finalized, the proposed rule would cause 3.1 million low-income individuals - including working poor families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities - to lose critical nutrition assistance. According to the administration's calculations, the rule would cause low-income Americans to lose at least \$10.5 billion in SNAP benefits.

Causing 265,000 children to lose free school meals: Children in households that receive SNAP are eligible for free meals at school. This rule change would mean an estimated 265,000 children nationwide would lose access to free school meals, leading to food insecurity and malnourishment. According to studies, food insecure (the disruption of food intake or eating patterns due to the lack of money or other resources) children are more likely to have learning difficulties and reduced academic performance, stomachaches, frequent headaches and colds, iron deficiency anemia, asthma, and mental health problems. Disproportionately taking SNAP benefits from seniors: According to estimates, this rule change would have a disproportionate impact on seniors. More than 13 percent of all SNAP households with elderly members would lose food assistance.

Harming public health and increasing healthcare costs: States' medical, disability and other systems will be burdened when people who lose SNAP benefits become food insecure or malnourished. Food insecurity is linked to some of the most potentially costly health conditions.

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