

# DETROIT NATIVE SUN

Enlightening the Community

## Telford Telescope: United we'll ALL Prosper

By Dr. John Telford  
SUN COLUMNIST



As we exited the perennially rainy month of April--even rainier in 2020 via global warming despite Trump having falsely pronounced it a MYTH fomented by the Chinese--I contemplate the deadly carnage caused by the fearsome corona virus, which our psychiat-

rically unfit false president was calling a HOAX throughout the first two-and-a-half months of 2020. While contemplating thus, I reflect too upon 2019, wherein Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer has proved to be eminently capable of governing during this terrifying pandemic and indeed is now on a short list for the Democratic vice presidential nomination. The day is long past when she once inadviseedly considered closing the African-American-populated Benton Harbor schools. That prospective closing would have played into the racist Trump's and his far-right-wing Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' nationwide chartering scheme for schools with predominately minority populations.

Under the DeVos scheme, black-and-brown-student-populated districts like Ecorse, River Rouge, Pontiac, Dearborn Heights Robichaud, and even Oak Park and Southfield wouldn't be far behind. Saginaw Buena Vista, Inkster, and Highland Park are gone already--and Detroit would be, had it not been for the pushback efforts of schools activist Helen Moore, former State Representative and then DPS board president LaMar Lemmons, the clarion Sam Riddle on his radio station and me on mine, and me serving pro bono as the superintendent commencing in the spring of 2012, aided by administrative volunteers I'd recruited to countermand the unwarranted state-imposed "emergency" financial MISmanagement of our school district. My intrepid pro bono staff featured now-State Representative and prospective 2021 Detroit mayoral candidate Sherry Gay-Dagnogo as my deputy, Claude Tiller and Robert Thomas as ombudsmen, and others. Ensuring that all students in the early grades learn to read competently will close our state's skills-gap, which has curtailed opportunity in competitive fields for far too many Michigan children--particularly for those in Detroit, our nation's poorest and blackest city. This crucial goal is what my intrepid DPS pro bono staff and duly elected school board were poised to undertake with the assistance of the research-based, field-proven QK2LRN/2 Sigma program, but in

2013 the Republican-majority legislature unjustly reinstated the emergency manager law that shut down the board and me abruptly, after Michiganiens had voted overwhelmingly to rescind the educationally counterproductive law.

This cursed corona-induced school closing--which may last even into the fall--has further decimated the educational opportunities for most of our state's black and brown children. Are we going to allay the fundamental financial and structural inequities in every struggling public school in Michigan, or are we going to continue to look the other way? How our leaders ultimately address the educational and moral crisis in Benton Harbor--an urbanized district whose 1,800 students are 92% black and 81% economically disadvantaged, and how our leaders address that same crisis in other districts with similar populations and problems--will impact us all. The thousands of young men and women we fail to educate won't simply vanish: they'll be coming to your place of business as a potential customer or employee--or perhaps with a more sinister intent. It's our righteous responsibility--as well as being in our mutual best interest--to confront the K - 12 educational crisis all throughout our state when--and even before--the virus threat has hopefully abated. We bemoan the fact we have a "brain drain"--that we educate students here who then depart for more welcomingly lucrative environs. Now is the time for us to collaborate across political parties and municipal boundaries to afford equitable resources and apply best instructional practices for every traditional public school--urban, suburban, and rural--toward our collective prosperity, which is suffering grievously from the ravages of COVID-19 and from the neo-fascist wannabe dictator Trump's having egged on the Nazi-and-Confederate-flag-wavers who defied our governor's and TRUMP'S OWN edict that they not congregate, but rather maintain social distancing and remain at home. For an as-yet-unforeseeable amount of time, our state's prosperity will thus CONTINUE to suffer grievously, therefore making the education of ALL of our children a concern that must truly become everyone's number-one priority.

John Telford, who will be a candidate for the DPSCD board on Nov. 2, was a world-ranked sprinter at WSU in the 1950s. Get his six Detroit-oriented books at Book Suey, 10345 Joseph Campau in Hamtramck (Info@booksuey.com) or on amazon.com (Type in Dr. John Telford). For signed copies, contact him at DrJohnTelfordEdD@aol.com or (313) 460-8272. Hear him Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on WCHB AM1340, which shows also appear currently on his Facebook page. His website is www.AlifeontheRUN.com.

## Families owed child support will receive funds intercepted from stimulus payments, tax refunds

LANSING, Mich. - As a result of a federal requirement, stimulus payments to non-custodial parents who owe child support will be directed to custodial parents and children, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced.

"The Office of Child Support wants to make sure parents understand what is happening with stimulus payments to people who owe child support," said Office of Child Support Director Erin Frisch.

As federal stimulus payments - officially known as Economic Impact Payments - authorized by the CARES Act are sent to Michigan parents who owe child support and qualify for enforcement, all or a portion of this payment will be intercepted by the IRS through the Tax Offset Program. The funds will then go to the MDHHS Office of Child Support to be applied to the

child support debt owed - as required by the CARES Act.

Funds will be distributed to the custodial parent or guardian in the same way the Office of Child Support distributes all yearly federal income tax refunds that are intercepted.

The CARES Act authorized stimulus payments to address economic issues and unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The law requires stimulus payments to apply to child support debt when distributing the funds. In some cases, the stimulus payments also will cover debt owed to the state based on specific case circumstances.

The Office of Child Support does not know how much Michigan will receive from the IRS, but expects to receive weekly payments until the stimulus payments discontinue.

## Michigan man charged with COVID-19 related wire fraud scheme

By Valerie D. Lockhart  
SUN EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A Michigan man was recently charged with wire fraud in connection to an e-commerce scheme that preyed on four people seeking to purchase N95 masks for protection from the coronavirus.

Rodney L. Stevenson II, 24, of Muskegon, is accused of operating EM General, LLC and accepting funds for medical grade anti-viral N95 respirator masks but never delivering the product. Three victims residing in the San Francisco Bay area paid over \$40 per mask, with one victim paying over \$400.

"Hospitals, healthcare providers and everyday people are understandably anxious to obtain N95 masks, N99 filters and other PPE," U.S. Attorney David L. Anderson said. "The criminal element is always ready to prey on fear and uncertainty, and it is all too easy to lie over the internet. While sheltering in place, Americans are shopping on the internet like never before. The complaint alleges a consumer's nightmare of fake web pages and false promises."

The masks were marketed as being a particulate-filtering face piece respirator that meets the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health N95 standard of air filtration. At least 95% of airborne particles are blocked from the

masks that cover a person's nose and mouth.

"The United States Postal Inspection Service has a long history of successfully investigating complex fraud cases," San Francisco Division Inspector in Charge Rafael E. Nuñez said. "Anyone or any organization engaging in deceptive practices, especially if they are attempting to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, should know they will not go undetected and will be held accountable. The collaborative investigative work on this case conducted by Postal Inspectors, our law enforcement partners, and the United States Attorney's Office illustrates our efforts to protect consumers."

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for May 18, 2020, in the Western District of Michigan. If convicted, Stevenson faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison, 5 years of probation, and a fine of \$1,000,000.

"The FBI will pursue criminals who attempt to deceive and defraud consumers at the expense of public safety during this pandemic," FBI Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett said. "During this crisis, the FBI remains vigilant in deterring, detecting, and investigating wrongdoing and will rigorously pursue those individuals and groups attempting to victimize the American public."

## Secretary Benson encourages voters to return absentee ballots as soon as possible

Those who are eligible and intend to vote in the May 5 election are strongly encouraged to cast their absentee ballots by mail as soon as possible, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson said today. In order for a ballot to be counted it must be received by the local clerk's office by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Approximately 740,000 voters were mailed applications, 213,011 submitted them, and already 86,355 have cast ballots - nearly 12 percent a week from the election. With turnout for May elections averaging at roughly 13 percent in recent years, these numbers indicate a significant increase in participation.

"The data confirms what we already knew; when people are given the option to vote from the comfort of their home, they overwhelmingly choose to do so," said Secretary Benson. "This level of turnout proves how committed Michigan voters are to participating in our democracy, and how even during a health crisis Michigan's elections are successful."

Earlier this month, absentee ballot applications and postage-paid return envelopes were mailed to every voter in the jurisdictions still holding May 5 elections - mainly those with

expiring millages or other funding concerns that could not wait until August.

"Even though we've already seen excellent turnout, everyone who is able to do so should still cast their ballot by mail as soon as possible," said Secretary Benson. "Voting by mail is a safe, secure and easy way to practice social distancing and engage in the democratic process at the same time."

For those unable to mail in their ballots in time, local clerk offices will be open on Election Day to serve as ballot drop locations. Same-day registration will also still be available, and those who need to request and then cast their absentee ballot in the office

may do so. Personal protection equipment (PPE) and detailed protocols on the social distancing measures were sent to clerks with elections, in addition to the Department of State putting out a recruitment call for election workers to fill in for the seniors who often serve but are more vulnerable to Covid-19.

"We had more than 1,600 people across the state volunteer to serve as election workers," said Secretary Benson. "That overwhelming response reinforced how committed the people of our state are to maintaining our democratic institutions, even in times of crisis."



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