

MS. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. My name is Maureen Taylor. Thank you to this wonderful young lady who was so good behind the scenes and managing stuff. Clearly it's working as well as it should be because we have the ladies in charge. No disrespect, guys.

My name is Maureen Taylor. I work with the Michigan Welfare Rights organization, and I bring you greetings from Michigan Welfare Rights. I think that the information provided by this Eisenhower report, based on the 40-year anniversary of the Kerner Report is worth just about as much as the Kerner Report was 40 years, which is not very much. What we always have is a litigation, an analysis and whatnot of rich people who come down to the neighborhood after we tear up everything and analyze and psychoanalyze; and after about two or three or four years they produce a very costly report to tell you why you went crazy. Okay? If they had asked anybody on the panel or anybody in the seats what the heck was wrong with you, you would have been able to tell them, and they could have just went to Kinko's and printed it up.

But this is a continual activity, what happens in this country. Things go bad. We go and psychoanalyze. We get some psychological reports. We bring the congressional and the senators and representatives out to try to explain what it is that happened. A glossy report comes out. I see we've got a book this time. Let's see. This is an activity about poverty, and this damn book costs \$24.95. Who is fooling who? The battle in this activity, particularly when we focus on what may be wrong in major cities, Welfare Rights has the position that it's the "twin towers of evil." It's both class and race. Now, these corporations drag the race card out and that -- boy, that horse has got more lives than anybody in the moon. They will drag that dead horse out, breathe some life into that sucker when it becomes convenient for them. We have poor white people in Appalachia that don't have indoor plumbing. We've got Native Americans all over the country that don't have indoor plumbing and getting shot and killed every day of the week. We have poor Latinos that are picking cotton right alongside of my cousins.

And we kind of act like these things don't happen. You know, we got poverty that exists in this country from birth up to death down. And then today's question is how we going to deal with this question of race.

We have a problem in this country where we are not sincere and we're not honest about the emperor and the clothes that the emperor is wearing.

Clearly, clearly, we see that there is a difficulty because we got 40-, 50,000 foreclosures. In this city we have African-Americans in charge. You know they always pick them African names: Gambia; they named Serengeti; they named Nile. And they cutting your throat every single day of the frigging week.

We got 45,000 people in this damn city that do not have water, and the church has abdicated its responsibility. It ran and hide. Every Baptist. Every Presbyterian. Almost all of the Methodists.

The Catholic church. The Jewish church. They done and went and took their ass someplace to hide why we've got poverty on every corner. On my way here there are people on corners, standing up with signs that say, "Will work for food." But we in here talking about what's the problem.

The Department of Human Services has just recently increased the amount of money they will allow for a woman and a child, a two-family household, to \$401 a month. It's been 371 for decades. But now it's \$401, and out of which that person has to pay rent, has to pay lights and gas and water and anything else that that child needs because that's all you got coming.

To add insult to injury, it's \$4.11 per day for a welfare recipient to eat. You think white people get a larger food stamp amount? You think the Native Americans get a larger food stamp amount? No.

We fail to deal with this question of poverty because we got this thing so mixed up. These African-Americans and their money and their middle class ideas will tell you that your poverty is better tolerated because they living high on the hog. That's that house Negro talking. And we listen to that nonsense.

I'm surprised you let George Cushingberry in this room. It surprises me because what we have in America is a continuation of both Democrats and Republicans that go back and forth to keep you in line because the corporations going to get what they need.

We sweep the Republicans out of office; Democrats go in, and the first damn thing they do is pass something called a nonbinding resolution. What the hell is that? It's not binding on anybody.

If we want to give reports about where we are and our conscience and how we settle these questions and whatnot, race is always going to be an issue in America because that's how they got to be rich. They stole me. They stole you. They took people from other lands and made you work for free.

That's how they got this wealth. But as black people, let's not act like we the only ones hurt.

Almost every Native American has been shot and killed. I don't know how we can look the other way and act like that didn't happen. We got immigration sweeps where they're picking up folks that look like they're Latino, taking them to an airport while the children that are home or the children trying to get home from school at 3 o'clock, crying, talking about where is mommy and daddy. And we didn't say anything. And we know this feeling. We know this terrorism.

They keep us divided with this mess. But we didn't say a loud enough noise when they came to the church and found the minister that bought the \$23,000 toilet seat, did we? We didn't see the church step up and say -- and criticize. What is the problem when

Farmer Jack's decided to leave the city of Detroit and Kroger said, "You ain't good enough to have us in your place." And not one of these African-American ministers came together and said, "Let's buy this store so we can have something for our people." I'm telling you it's just nonsense. It's just nonsense.

My colleagues are correct. The leaders of this country -- I got ready to go to the parking lot today, and this young lady told me I couldn't park in the parking lot where I always park because she told me the higher ups and the VIPs has got the parking lot out here. I told her, "Who do you think I am? I am the higher up and the VIP. What are you telling me?" But what she was trying to talk about is that these political individuals, these ones who are the gatekeepers to hell, got a chance to park close to the building and you and me had to park around the corner.

If we want to deal with this question of what it is that's wrong in this city, what it is that's wrong with this state, we're talking about the inability to be able to maintain a job because we have been tied to the auto industry for 30, 40, and 50 years. General Motors was happy with that. As long as we were working in them factories, they didn't have anything to say. Now that they have the opportunity to produce and make money on the basis of our getting kicked out, they don't want to do healthcare no more. You do it now. All kinds of new rules.

David Satcher, who was the first African-American surgeon general in this country, when he retired, he made a statement that in America 66 percent of the people that live here have undiagnosed mental health problems. It might be an even higher number.

In order to deal with this question of race and class, we do as Jose. We do have to throw some money at it. You give me a million dollars and watch me fix some things in this city of Detroit that wasn't fixed before. We do have to have money. We do have to have power. We do have to have influence.

And since we're not going to get it from those no-good, mean-spirited Republicans and those spina-bifida, lackless, ain't-got-no-courage Democrats, what we really want John Conyers to do is get out of that damn Congress. Talk about a third party. Let him lead it, and then we'll go back and take this country back.

My name is Maureen Taylor. I work with Michigan Welfare Rights, and thank you for the opportunity to talk.