

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Starkes explains that, “Nothing holds someone back more than seeing himself as a victim... Because a victim is not responsible for his situation. Everything is someone else’s fault. And the victim sees little chance of improving his life. How can he get ahead if someone is holding him back. All this makes the victim unhappy, frustrated and angry. This is how too many blacks see themselves – as victims. So much so that their victim status becomes their primary identity and their ruling ideology... Unfortunately, many black churches preach this ‘victimology,’ many black parents pass it on to their children, inner-city schools teach it to their students and the black media reinforce it.” Why do you think that churches, parents, and schools perpetuate this victim mentality? Considering the recent, obvious success of blacks, such as Barak Obama being elected to the presidency twice, why do you think that many young blacks so readily accept the victim mentality?
- Mr. Starkes goes on to note that, “The honest race dialogue and debate – that first has to happen – is not between blacks and whites but between blacks and blacks. We demand diversity from others, but need to practice it ourselves where it really matters – in thought, opinion, and even political affiliation.” What do you think Mr. Starkes means by this? What factors do you think contribute to the black community being so largely monolithic in their thoughts and opinions regarding race, especially their own?
- Later, Mr. Starkes shares with us the startling facts that, “The Tuskegee Institute conducted a study of all known lynchings of blacks that occurred between 1882-1968. During this 86-year span, which is essentially the post-Civil War era up to the Civil Rights era, 3,446 Blacks were reportedly lynched. Presently, black-on-black murder eclipses the number of blacks lynched over the course of 80 years roughly every six months.” Why do you think that so many blacks are killing other blacks? Why do you think that this tragic condition is being largely ignored?
- Mr. Starkes goes on to point out that, “Unwavering loyalty to progressive, liberal policies is the primary reason these dire conditions persist. It both makes them possible and perpetuates them... progressivism is the common thread that binds predominately black cities where single-parent homes, failing schools, rampant poverty and crime predominate... cities like Detroit, Philadelphia and Baltimore [have] been run by progressive Democrats for decades. If their liberal policies were at all effective, these cities should have become models of economic growth and prosperity. Instead, they’re models of dysfunction. By fostering and exploiting the victim mentality, discouraging self-examination, subsidizing baby-mamas, and making excuses for black thugs, so-called progressive policies don’t alleviate the problems that afflict the black community, they aggravate those problems.” Considering that this is the case, why do you think that so many blacks continue to support and vote for progressive politicians? Why do you think that so many blacks become progressive politicians?
- At the end of the video, Mr. Starkes concludes and warns that, “There will be no solution to the problems afflicting black America until more blacks recognize that the issues plaguing our community are ultimately self-inflicted. Does racism exist? Sure. But there are other problems far more serious. And waiting until there are no more racists will mean waiting, and making excuses, forever.” What do you think motivates many blacks to ‘make excuses’

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Detroit

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “How The Democrats Destroyed Detroit,” then answer the questions that follow.

- How did Mayor Cavanagh contribute to Detroit’s downfall? Who was Coleman Young, and what did he do to make Detroit’s condition worse? What is the ‘Detroit Pattern,’ and how does this model hurt a city? What did city leaders do when America’s manufacturing decline hit Detroit? What should they have done? What contributed to DPS’s colossal failure, and what benchmarks are evidence of that failure? Why have so many people left Detroit? How long must a person wait, on average, for the police to respond to a call?
- In general, how did the Democrats destroy Detroit? What do you think needs to happen in order for the conditions in Detroit to improve?
- What information in the article supports the main points in the video?



QUIZ

THE TOP 5 ISSUES FACING BLACK AMERICANS

1. What is “victimology”?
 - a. Black schools teaching children the history of American Indians.
 - b. Black parents teaching their children they are not victims.
 - c. Blacks making their victim status their primary identity.
 - d. Blacks making their victim status something to avoid.

2. The honest race dialogue and debate first has to happen between _____.
 - a. blacks and whites
 - b. blacks and blacks
 - c. black progressives and black conservatives
 - d. black single mothers and black married mothers

3. Urban terrorists are spawned from _____.
 - a. progressive policies
 - b. the black church
 - c. the disintegration of the nuclear family
 - d. victimology

4. The out of wedlock birth rate in 1965 was nearly 25 percent. Today, it is _____.
 - a. nearly 25%
 - b. nearly 47%
 - c. nearly 52%
 - d. nearly 75%

5. What is the number one problem that faces Black Americans?
 - a. Racism.
 - b. Urban terrorism
 - c. Lack of diversity.
 - d. Unquestioning allegiance to progressive policies.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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HOW THE DEMOCRATS DESTROYED DETROIT

By Arnold Ahlert March 4, 2013



Detroit, now synonymous with failure and decline, was once the emblem of American progress and prosperity. As the late biographer and scholar Matthew Josephson observed in the 1920s: “Nowhere in the world may the trend of the new industrial cycle be perceived more clearly than in Detroit. In this sense it is the most modern city in the world, the city of tomorrow.” University of Michigan historian Jeffrey Mirel puts it this way: “Throughout the 1920s, Detroit was the shining star of the new era, the very center of the American economic universe, where capitalism and technology combined to produce the greatest goods for the greatest numbers.”

To most Americans, Detroit is best known as the home of the “Big Three” auto makers—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—who made the U.S. and the rest of the world mobile. During the decades of the early to mid twentieth century, the auto industry's need for massive quantities of steel, glass, copper, and (later) plastic gave rise to numerous enterprises related to car manufacture that employed hundreds of thousands of additional blue-collar workers in and around the city. The assembly line was perfected here, and brought with it the idea that a middle-class lifestyle could be enjoyed by industrial workers.

In World War II, Detroit was the arsenal of democracy, producing tanks, jeeps and a host of other weapons that helped win the war. In the postwar years the city boomed, building American cars that in turn symbolized the American Dream—of mobility, financial stability, and success. By the 1950s Detroit had grown to become the fifth largest city in the United States, home to nearly two million residents. By 1960,

it had the highest per capita income of any city in the country.

As the Sixties progressed, Motown Records—founded in Detroit by one of its native sons, Berry Gordy Jr.—produced such megastars as Diana Ross and the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, the Jackson Five, the Temptations, the Four Tops, the Commodores, and Gladys Knight & the Pips who made the music America hummed. The city school system, meanwhile, turned out capable graduates. Hard as it is to believe today—when Detroit has the desolate, bombed-out look of a conquered nation—a generation ago there were few more exciting and attractive places for Americans to live.

But amidst the good times, the seeds of Detroit's future disintegration were being sown. In some cases this occurred in very obvious ways that everyone could plainly see, most notably a rising militancy among local community organizers angered by what they perceived to be the slow pace of civil-rights reforms. Rev. Albert Cleague and other Detroit-area activists openly called for black separatism and self-determination, on the premise that whites would never voluntarily choose to share political power with blacks. At a July 1967 Black Power rally in Detroit, the radical H. Rap Brown gave voice to the city's growing unrest when he warned that if "Motown" did not make sufficient reforms, "we are going to burn you down."

In other ways, the seeds of Detroit's eventual decline germinated quietly, scarcely noticed, and with implications that few could appreciate at the time. Most significantly, in 1961 the reins of political power in the city fell permanently into Democratic Party hands. In the 53 years that have passed since then, Detroit has not had a single Republican mayor. Indeed it has elected only *one* Republican to its City Council since 1970. As it has become a political monoculture, it has also become a failed city.

The first mayor of Detroit's Democratic Party era, Jerome Cavanagh (1962-70), was a proud white liberal who greatly expanded the role of government in his city and took pains to appoint blacks to prominent positions in his administration—including police chief.

Cavanagh also served on the "Model Cities" task force that President Lyndon Johnson launched in 1966 as part of his Great Society and War on Poverty programs. Distantly echoing Soviet efforts to rebuild urban areas in Eastern Europe, this centralized approach to urban development was seen in the '60s as the hallmark of a new era. Along with United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther, Cavanagh persuaded President Johnson to designate a nine-square-mile section of Detroit—an area where 134,000 people (one-ninth of the city's population) resided—as a pilot location for the Model Cities initiative. The overriding objective of Model Cities was to demonstrate the amazing things that massive federal grants could accomplish in terms of rehabilitating a physically and socially decrepit neighborhood—i.e., replace slums with publicly financed "affordable housing"; alleviate poverty by injecting rivers of taxpayer money into social programs; provide ghetto dwellers with federally funded jobs at municipal and nonprofit agencies; and create a host of job-training, healthcare, educational, and recreational facilities for the poor. In just a few short years, \$490 million in federal funds were poured into Detroit to bankroll these programs. On top of this, Cavanaugh was able to get Michigan's state legislature to pass a "commuter tax" and a new income tax that would help pay for the Model Cities program and would be borne entirely by "the rich."

The government giveaways not only failed to imbue their beneficiaries with the values and motivations necessary for upward mobility, but actually fostered resentment at the paternalism embedded in the Model Cities program—the idea that "disadvantaged" people's decisions about where they could live, where they could build businesses, and how they should run those enterprises should be micromanaged by a bureaucratic elite.

In the final analysis, for all the hugger mugger at its launching, Detroit's Model City program proved to be little more than a boondoggle into which at least half-a-billion taxpayer dollars purchased precious little in terms of urban regeneration. Some contend that the program "worked," in the sense that it temporarily—albeit at an unsustainable cost—decreased poverty and unemployment slightly in the targeted communities. But instead of encouraging entrepreneurship and self-reliance, it promoted mainly dependence on government. Thus the program led to no lasting gains for its "beneficiaries." By 1990, Detroit's Model City area had lost 63% of its population and 45% of its housing units. On balance, most analysts now view the program as having been a dismal failure.

Mayor Cavanaugh's political and economic policies failed not only to resuscitate Detroit's blighted neighborhoods, but also to assuage the percolating rage of local black militants. With every guilty gesture of appeasement and recompense that the mayor made, the radicals only grew more righteously indignant at the inadequacy of those gestures. In short, a "revolution of rising expectations" was intractably gaining momentum. And then, in July 1967, Detroit was the scene of the decade's most horrific race riot—43 deaths, nearly 1,200 injuries, over 7,200 arrests, and more than 2,000 buildings destroyed. The effects of this calamity would not be short-lived. Indeed the riots triggered a massive "white flight" out of central Detroit, which saw at least 140,000 people move away within a mere 18 months. With a large share of its tax base thus depleted, the city would never be the same again.

By now the Democratic Party—increasingly radicalized by the growing influence of the New Left—had seized control of the city and made it into a laboratory experiment for destructive urban policies. Then in 1974, Democrat Coleman Young, a secret member of Communist Party USA, began a 20-year stint as Detroit's first black mayor. His tenure in office was disastrous for the city on many levels, including its finances. It was under Young's leadership that Detroit's debt rating first reached junk status. Manhattan Institute scholar Steven Malanga writes that Young, from an economic standpoint, "lacked a plan except to go to war with the city's major institutions and demand that the federal government save it with subsidies," a strategy that critics referred to as "tin-cup urbanism." The eminent political scientist James Q. Wilson, for his part, wrote that by the end of Young's mayoralty, Detroit was "a fiscal and social wreck."

Young also helped poison the waters of black-white relations in Detroit. Rather than try to ease the city's racial tensions, he inflamed them by playing the race card to maintain his hold on city hall. The mayor routinely denigrated Detroit's police force and engaged in an "us-against-them" style of politics that essentially branded anyone who opposed him as a "racist." This toxic contrivance, on clear display at the highest levels of city government, increased racial polarization, drove multitudes of whites out of the city, and helped plunge Detroit ever deeper into social and economic chaos. By 1987, 34% of Detroit residents were on welfare rolls—more than 4 times as many as in 1967. During that same period, nearly 200,000 jobs were lost in the city. Former *New York Times* ombudsman and *TIME* editor Daniel Okrent has portrayed Young's mayoralty as the "corrosive two-decade rule of a black politician who cared more about retribution than about resurrection." The *Washington Post*, similarly, has described Young as someone who promoted "racial divisiveness" and "did little to try and mend fences broken down along racial lines."

Nowhere was this more apparent than in Young's policies vis à vis law-enforcement. Dividing his city's police department along racial lines, the mayor created separate layoff lists for white and black officers—so as to ensure that if ever it were to become necessary to trim the police force to any degree, the number of black officers affected could be limited. Young made it clear, moreover, that policing practices which resulted in disproportionately high numbers of arrests or citations of African Americans would not be tolerated. As one black officer bluntly told journalist Tamar Jacoby: "I wouldn't write tickets for black kids."

In 1976 Young did indeed cut the Detroit police force by 20% as a means of addressing the city's budget deficit, and Detroit became one of the most violent cities in the United States. Throughout the course of Young's two decades as mayor, the city's homicide rate was about twice as high as it had been in 1964. By 1987 the city's homicide rate was 3 times higher than it had been two decades earlier. But when local residents complained about runaway crime, the mayor sneered that their calls for "law and order" were nothing more than "code" for "Keep the ni--ers in their place."

Young further debased Detroit law-enforcement by putting his own corrupt people in charge of it. Most notably he appointed as police chief his close friend William Hart, who in 1992 was convicted of embezzling \$1.3 million from a police undercover anti-drug fund—money which he then lavished on female paramours while lying repeatedly to cover up his crimes; Hart was eventually sentenced to 15 years in prison for his crime.

For good measure, Young also appointed his business associate and former investment advisor Kenneth Weiner—who had no prior police experience—as Detroit's civilian deputy police chief. While in that post,

Weiner conspired with William Hart to illegally divert another \$1.3 million to phony corporations that Weiner controlled. For this, Weiner would be incarcerated for five years. In yet another matter, Weiner was convicted of all 40 counts against him for his role in a pyramid scheme through which he and Coleman Young had duped investors out of millions of dollars.

It should be noted that corruption has remained a hallmark of Detroit politics ever since Young's tenure. Some lowlights:

- In 2006, former Detroit City Council member Alonzo Bates was convicted of having improperly put one of his relatives on the city payroll, a transgression for which he was sentenced to 33 months in prison.
- In 2009, Detroit City Council member Monica Conyers, wife of U.S. House Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan), pleaded guilty to federal bribery charges and went on to serve 27 months in a federal penitentiary.
- In 2008, Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick agreed to resign from his office and spend four months in jail for two obstruction-of-justice felony counts.
- In 2010, Kilpatrick was sentenced to additional jail time for violating the terms of his probation related to the 2008 conviction.
- In March 2013, Kilpatrick was found guilty of 24 offenses including fraud, racketeering and extortion.
- In 2012, Detroit Police Chief Ralph Godbee Jr. retired when it became publicly known that he was sexually involved with a female officer in the department.
- In 2013, two Detroit city officials—pension-fund lawyer Ronald Zajac and Police & Fire pension trustee Paul Stewart—were indicted in a bribery scandal.

Not surprisingly, a recent poll of Detroit residents found that they largely hold their city's public officials in very low esteem. But this has not, as noted earlier, stopped them from continuing to vote for Democratic political candidates with near unanimity.

Under the unbroken chain of Democrats who have led the city ever since 1961, Detroit has taken on some of the characteristics of an experiment in the creation of a social underclass. Its population today is 82.7% black and 10.6% white, a statistical fact that necessarily skews the city's politics heavily toward the Democratic Party, given that African Americans overwhelmingly self-identify as Democrats. Moreover, traditional nuclear families are rarely seen in Detroit. The city's out-of-wedlock birth rate exceeds 75%, and married-parent families with children younger than 18 constitute only 9.2% of all residents. This phenomenon, too, is in large measure a by-product of the city's large black population, as the black illegitimacy rate nationwide is currently 73%.

Economic hardship in the Motor City is both widespread and profound. Indeed the population of Detroit has a per capita income of just \$14,861 (scarcely half the national average), a median household income of \$26,955 (about half the national median), and a poverty rate of 38.1% (about 2.5 times the U.S. average). Approximately 34.5% of Detroit residents receive food stamps, and the city's unemployment rate is above 18%. Even more significant is Detroit's paltry 54.3% work-force participation rate, a measure of all people who either have a job or are looking for one. The other 45.7%, meanwhile, are neither employed nor seeking work of any kind. Since 1970, the number of Detroiters with jobs has dropped by more than 53%.

Detroit's economic malaise has been brought about by decades of irresponsible practices that sociologist Thomas Sowell has nicknamed the “Detroit Pattern,” a reference to the city's custom of “increasing taxes, harassing businesses, and pandering to unions.” These three factors bear closer examination:

1) *Taxes*

Because of Detroit's middle-class population exodus and eroding tax base, city leaders have tried repeatedly from the 1960s onward to regain lost revenue through tax increases. Today, Detroit's property-tax rates today are the highest in the nation. When the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in 2011 analyzed the

effective property-tax rates in America's 50 largest cities (i.e. those with a population of more than 350,000), it found that Detroit not only imposed the top rates on private homes, but also on apartment, commercial, and industrial buildings. In fact, Detroit's tax rates are generally twice as high as the overall average nationwide. This trend has succeeded only in driving businesses away and causing taxpayers to relocate to the suburbs in still-larger numbers. By 2012, Detroit's tax *revenues*—notwithstanding the high *rates*—were 40% lower, in constant 2012 dollars, than they had been in 1962.

Another reason why Detroit's stratospheric tax rates have resulted in meager government revenues is because of the city's rapidly declining property values. Over the past half-century, the total assessed value of property in Detroit has fallen (in inflation-adjusted dollars) by 77%. The median home price in Motown is now just \$40,000, and many dwellings in the city's most blighted areas sell for less than \$1,000.

In an effort to exploit this trend for their own advantage, many Detroit homeowners (who bought their houses when prices were higher) purposely allow themselves to be foreclosed upon. They then re-purchase the same properties at a greatly reduced cost, thus legally wiping out their outstanding debt. Six hundred Detroit homes were repurchased in this manner in 2012 alone.

The non-payment of property taxes has also become a widespread phenomenon in Detroit. In 2012, for example, some 47% of all homeowners in the city elected not to pay their taxes—mainly because the city's cash-strapped government had failed to provide most of the basic services normally funded by such revenues.

(2) Harassing Businesses

In recent decades, the Democrats in control of Detroit have cultivated an oppressive climate for small businesses by instituting a complex constellation of protectionist regulations on all manner of enterprise. In 2013, economist Dean Stansel conducted an “economic freedom” study that ranked the regulatory and tax climates of 384 U.S. metro areas, and found that Detroit placed a lowly 345th. The Institute For Justice (IFJ) observes that the massive amounts of “time and money” that business owners must expend in order to comply with “all the regulatory requirements” of Detroit's “stupefying bureaucracy” cause many aspiring entrepreneurs to “simply give up their business dreams.” Adds IFJ:

“Multiple inspections and inspection fees, incomprehensible building requirements, expensive, mandatory public hearings, arbitrary discretion by officials, and lengthy processing delays combine to discourage entrepreneurs from undertaking business ventures or improving existing ones. From sign taxes to restrictions on planting trees, the bureaucratic shuffle has gotten so out of hand that one business owner explained, 'We operate on the basis that we just do what we want to do and the permits will catch up with us sometime.'”

According to one survey, 56% of small-business owners in Detroit are unsure whether they are operating in full compliance with the law.

(3) Pandering to Unions

Detroit's network of nearly incomprehensible business regulations is largely the creation of its vast public bureaucracy, which is dominated by approximately four-dozen labor unions that reflexively object to any proposals advocating the privatization of the services they provide. Over time, the long succession of Democratic political administrations that have run Detroit have lavished such high salaries and lucrative pensions and health-benefit packages on members of these unions (whom they regard as their core political constituency), that it is now virtually impossible for the city to balance its budget and meet its financial obligations. One of the consequences of this unholy alliance between Democrat politicians and union bosses is that current employee contributions can't keep pace with the needs of current pension recipients.

When America's manufacturing decline hit Detroit a few decades ago, city leaders did not take steps to

reduce the size of their government, as would have been prudent. Instead they increased government spending to unprecedented levels. As a study by the Heritage Foundation found:

“[F]ollowing in the footsteps of the automakers, [they] acquiesced to the unions by increasing employee benefits, especially future pensions and retiree health care. Leaders also ceded control and flexibility over employees to unions in their labor contracts, making it much more difficult to cut costs or restructure the workforce when and as needed. To attempt to pay for it all, Detroit continually increased taxes and engaged in prolific borrowing when the tax increases did not close the gap.”

Today Detroit's government sends monthly checks (with an average value of \$1,600 apiece) to some 21,000 public-sector retirees and their families. This is more than twice the number of workers (9,700) who are currently employed by the city. The pension obligations that Detroit owes to its retirees account for about half of the city's \$18 to \$20 billion in long-term unfunded debt.

By early 2013, Detroit's finances had become so chaotic that Michigan Governor Rick Snyder appointed attorney Kevyn Orr to serve as the city's emergency financial manager in a last-resort effort to avoid the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history. According to *The New York Times*, Orr, in that position, was authorized “to cut city spending, change contracts with labor unions, merge or eliminate city departments, urge the sale of city assets and even, if all else fail[s], recommend bankruptcy proceedings.”

Orr attributed Detroit's “dysfunctional and wasteful” operations to “years of budgetary restrictions, mismanagement, crippling operational practices and, in some cases, indifference or corruption.” In May 2013 he issued a report stating that the city was “clearly insolvent on a cash flow basis,” that its budget deficit was approaching \$386 million, and that fully one-third of its budget was being spent on retiree benefits for former public-sector employees. It was clear that without judicious and substantial cuts to retiree benefits, there would be no stopping this runaway fiscal train. But in July 2013, Detroit's two largest municipal pension funds filed suit in state court specifically to prevent Orr from instituting such cuts. The proverbial writing was on the wall, thus Detroit went ahead and filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy.

Another major financial drain on taxpayers has been the money that the city spends on its Detroit Public School (DPS) system—more than \$15,500 per pupil, or nearly 50% more than the national average. Notwithstanding these enormous outlays, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan characterized DPS as a “national disgrace” in 2009.

That same year, DPS was put under the control of an emergency financial manager—the Washington, DC board of education's former president, Robert Bobb—in an attempt to prevent bankruptcy. Before long, Bobb found that many of DPS's financial problems stemmed from willful corruption. For instance:

- In June 2009, Bobb enlisted the services of a team of forensic accounting analysts who discovered that 257 “ghost” employees were illegally receiving paychecks from DPS.
- Two months later, seven additional public officials were charged with felonies for operating an embezzlement scheme that siphoned tens of thousands of dollars out of the school system.
- It was also discovered that some 500 people who had been illegally enrolled as healthcare-plan dependents were costing the school district millions of dollars per year.
- In 2012, a DPS contract accountant and her daughter, who was a schoolteacher, were indicted by the FBI on charges of fraud, conspiracy, and tax offenses.

The appointment of DPS's emergency manager, however, did nothing to improve student performance. In the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a U.S. Department of Education standardized test, fourth- and eighth-graders in the city's public schools currently read at a level that is 73% below the national average, and lower than that of students in any other urban school district in the country. Similarly, the reading skills of Detroit's eighth-graders are 60% below the national average, and their math scores in 2009 were the lowest ever recorded in the then-40-year history of the exam.

It should be noted, however, that DPS was not always the colossal failure that it is today. In 1923, for instance, Alice Barrows of the U.S. Bureau of Education stated, "Detroit must be put foremost in the ranks of cities which have made a newer and better education possible." In a survey of school superintendents two years later, Detroit schools ranked first in the nation in organizational efficiency and visual instruction, and third in "excellence in teaching reading, writing, composition, and arithmetic." In 1927, *New Republic* described the Detroit school system as "one of the finest in the world."

Things began to deteriorate markedly in the 1950s, when, as historian Jeffrey Mirel writes, "the liberal-labor-black coalition that formed in the late 1940s took control of the school system." From that point onward, school officials in Detroit deemphasized traditional basic skills and focused instead on the need for "interesting, attractive and constructive courses" to hold students' interest. They called for the expansion of "relevant" programs like vocational education, driver training, and "family living." Asserting that such measures "unquestionably diluted the quality of the high school program," Mirel writes that "[b]y the early 1960s, the [liberal-labor-black] coalition had substantially altered the direction of school policies and programs in Detroit." Conservatives of the period, meanwhile, lamented that "a majority of ... graduates" could not "spell many of the simple words in everyday use"; had "no grounding in literature, English, arithmetic, discipline, or any practical knowledge"; and were "totally unprepared for advanced study or the ordinary tasks of life."

After several more decades of Democratic leftist leadership, Detroit schools are now worse than ever. Consider, for instance, the results of exams that the Michigan Educational Assessment Program administered in 2012-13 to measure students' abilities in a variety of different subject areas:

- The percentage of students whose scores indicated proficiency in math were: 15.7% of third-graders; 18.8% of fourth-graders; 17% of fifth-graders; 13.6% of sixth-graders; 13.2% of seventh-graders; and fewer than 11.1% of eighth-graders.
- The percentage of students whose scores indicated proficiency in reading were: 42.7% of third-graders; 40.7% of fourth-graders; 44.5% of fifth-graders; 45.3% of sixth-graders; 33% of seventh-graders; and 45.8% of eighth-graders.
- Only fifth- and eighth-graders were tested in science, and fewer than 10% of each group registered scores that indicated proficiency.
- Only sixth- and ninth-graders were tested in social studies, and fewer than 10% of each group registered scores that indicated proficiency.
- Only fourth- and seventh-graders were tested in writing, and just 19.5% of the former and 28% of the latter registered scores that indicated proficiency.

As of June 2012, a miniscule 1.8% of DPS high-school seniors were considered capable of doing college-level work. Even at what is recognized as the district's top secondary school, Renaissance High, only 10% of the students were considered "college ready."

By no means are the parents of these underachieving children blind to the fact that DPS is an academic basket case. A recent survey of Detroit-area parents found that 79% of respondents did not want their children educated by the city's public schools.

Sadly, there is evidence that the substandard education which Detroit's public-school students receive has lasting effects that will haunt them for the rest of their lives: Researchers report that 47% of the city's adult residents are functionally illiterate.

Apart from its catastrophic fiscal and educational problems, Detroit has long ranked as one of the most dangerous places in the United States. Each year from 2009 through 2013, for instance, *Forbes* magazine rated Detroit as America's Most Dangerous City. FBI data confirm that Detroit's metro division has the highest violent-crime rate in the nation. Indeed the city's homicide rate is now at its highest level in 40 years, and is more than 10 times greater than the national average. In addition, the robbery rate in Detroit is about 6.1 times the national average; the assault rate is 5.5 times the national average; and property crimes like burglary and auto theft occur at rates that are 3 and 7 times higher, respectively, than the national

average.

The crime rates that plague Detroit are exacerbated by the fact that the city's financial woes have necessitated budget (and manpower) cuts to the local police force. Thus, when Detroit residents place a phone call seeking help from the city's understaffed police department, they must wait an average of 58 minutes for an officer to arrive on the scene. The average wait nationwide, by contrast, is 11 minutes.

Given this brief profile of steep urban decline, it is hardly surprising that a *Forbes* magazine analysis named Detroit as America's "most miserable" city in 2013. Signs of this misery are everywhere. For example, Detroit:

- has been the site of 11,000 to 12,000 fires every year for the past decade;
- currently has just 370 functioning street lights per square mile, compared to 812 for Cleveland and 785 for St. Louis;
- has seen more than half of its parks close down since 2008; and
- has approximately 99,000 vacant housing units (out of a total of 363,000).

Detroit's social and economic entropy in recent decades has resulted in a staggering population decline. Between 1950 and 2012, the city's population shrank from 1.85 million to 685,000. Nor is there any reason to believe that this trend will reverse itself anytime soon. In 2012 a *Detroit News* poll found that 40% of Detroiters hoped to leave the city within five years.