

# GREEN PARTY OF MICHIGAN



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### Editor's Note

The murder of Freddie Gray by Baltimore police and the powerful community response coupled with the biggest demonstration in Detroit in recent history (2,000 people for a \$15 hour/minimum wage) highlights the critical importance of young people, especially young Black people, to advancing the interests of all people.

Young people of color play a special role inside a society as racist as the United States. When they struggle, when they move forward to confront problems of their lives, the effects rumble throughout society as if from earthquakes deep inside its crust.

We urge everyone to learn the truth about the daily lives of Black people, working class Black people, in the United States. We urge everyone to find a way to support these fronts of struggle – whether it is supporting Black Lives Matter and stopping police murder of Black men or raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour or stopping

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## Critical Points of Struggle : Education

For Greens, education is connected to both social justice and grassroots democracy:

**Social Justice** -- The children of the human race are the future of the human race and public education is an important component of childhood life. The difference in public education for poor and working-class children compared to upper middle class and rich children in southeast Michigan can be measured by the several thousand dollar difference in per pupil spending between Birmingham and Detroit. Institutional racism and education to keep the working class oppressed are at the core of public education

**Grassroots Democracy** -- Schools, programs and employees of education are public. This country has a tradition of elected school boards. Through this mechanism parents, students and teachers can work together and advance the interests of all. Because true public education is a struggle in a society governed by the 1%, education is also connected to grassroots democracy. With the sabotage of the elected school board in Detroit and other African-American cities through emergency managers, grassroots democracy is denied and the results are feared but expected. Much that is public is made private, much of it is destroyed and all of it is abused for profit.

– The Editor

### Coalition Report Promises Much, Delivers Little

A central goal of the Detroit Data and Democracy Project is to provide timely, accessible, and informed insight on major educational issues affecting our metropolitan region and state. On March 30, 2015, the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren delivered its much-anticipated recommendations for Detroit schools to Governor Snyder. Given the attention that the Coalition's recommendations have received in the regional and national press and from policy makers, we felt the recommendations contained in its 28-page report merited a carefully considered review.

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### 18 Detroit Schools Close As Hundreds of Teachers Protest Gov. Snyder.

Eighteen schools in Detroit canceled class Thursday as hundreds of teachers trekked to Lansing to protest Gov. Rick Snyder's announcement of plans to reform Detroit Public Schools. Snyder is set to announce his plan for Detroit Public Schools and education reform in Detroit at 11:45 a.m. Thursday in Detroit. Speculation on the announcement has included splitting Detroit Public Schools into two districts: one to educate children and another to pay off the district's enormous debts. Steve Conn, head of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, said he didn't think teachers were sending the wrong message by forcing school cancellations to protest the

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## Michigan Governor Wants to Split Detroit Public Schools District to Isolate Debt

Gov. Rick Snyder has laid out a plan the struggling Detroit Public Schools district, which has big debts and poor student achievement in many of its approximately 100 schools. Snyder said the district has reached a “crisis point where systemic change is needed.” Under the plan, the existing Detroit Public Schools would continue under the direction of the emergency manager and the elected Board of Education for the sole purpose of paying off the district’s debt.

Detroit closes many schools for day due to teacher shortage. A new district -- the City of Detroit Education District -- would operate the schools under the

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## Snyder Wants All Public Schools to Meet Higher Standards

Gov. Rick Snyder said he would announce “within weeks” an education plan that will hold all public schools, including charters, to higher, uniform standards — but cautioned that there would be no grand bargain to help rid the Detroit Public Schools of its massive debt.

Snyder said his goal is to balance supply and demand where charter schools are concerned. “I’m not sure I would use the word moratorium,” he said about charter schools in an interview Wednesday.

“What I want to do is make sure we don’t have an oversupply.” Currently, there are more seats than children in Detroit, counting traditional public schools,

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## Water is a Human Right

Water is necessary for life. The political issue of water has been a main focus of Michigan Greens for our fourteen years of existence. The political issue of water touches all four key pillars of the Green Party – ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, social justice and nonviolence. Water as a human right; water as a part of the commons; water as a sustainable, renewable resource; the water wars already engaged.

Detroit Greens were founding members of the Peoples Water Board Coalition (PWBC) in Detroit and have been engaged in its work since then. Besides the Detroit Greens the Coalition includes the Sierra Club, Food and Water Watch, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, We the People, Detroiters Resisting Emergency Management, East Michigan Environmental Action Council, among others.

-The Editor

## Water is a Basic Human Right, Baltimore

Thousands of families catching rainwater to drink, using water from their neighbors to flush toilets — have we learned nothing from those recent scenes in Detroit, where families rallied in the streets when the city starting shutting off the water? The United Nations said the shut off was a violation of the “most basic human rights,” and caravans from Canada even drove to Detroit to hand out free water to its neediest residents. Baltimore City risks a similar emergency as our Public Works Department plans to shut off the tap on tens of thousands of low-income residents next week with little notice and no public hearing. This

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## Statement on Water Affordability

Metro Detroit needs affordable and accessible water and sewage rates and payment plans for vulnerable populations based on income. Over several weeks of participation on the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP) committee meetings, we have arrived at several conclusions about this process and its outcomes on water access and affordability for low-income customers: The GLWA WRAP is designed to fail. It is a very underfunded program intended to serve a larger population of customers than current, failing DWSD assistance programs. WRAP is based on temporary

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## Despite Detroit Efforts to Help, Water Shutoffs Loom

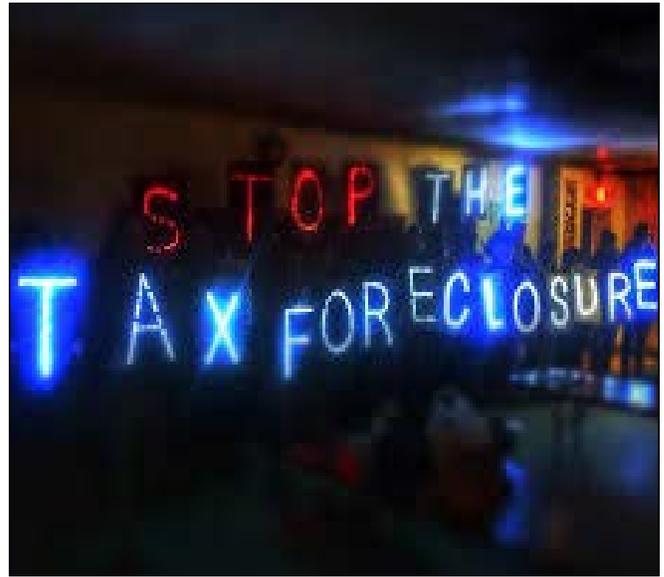
Despite increased efforts last year to help many Detroiters keep up with their water bills, the city is back in frustrating, familiar territory again — getting ready to cut off water to about 28,000 customers. The shutoffs will begin next month. A city report obtained by the Free Press shows more than 73,000 active residential accounts with \$47 million in bills at least two months late. The documents show the city has been unable to move many customers into good standing. As of last June, there were more than 79,000 delinquent accounts owing \$42 million. Additionally, activists who’ve attended meetings with city officials say they were

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## Let’s Ban Fracking in Michigan!

High volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing — commonly called fracking — was developed in the late 1990s.<sup>1</sup> After drilling the well several miles underground, first vertically and then horizontally, companies mix chemicals — many of them cancer-causing or neurotoxic — with millions of gallons of water and sand, then blast the mixture underground under intense pressure to break up deep shale or other rock formations and extract oil and natural gas.

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## Michigan News

### Supreme Court Justices Appear Divided on Gay Marriage

For better or worse, the fate of Michigan's same-sex marriage ban -- and same-sex marriage bans across the nation -- now rests squarely with the U.S. Supreme Court. Predict an outcome at your peril. If Tuesday's historic arguments were any indication, much of the court is profoundly divided about redefining an institution as traditional and central to human culture as one-man, one-woman

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### A Foreclosure Conveyor Belt The Continuing Depopulation of Detroit

Unlike so many industrial innovations, the revolving door was not developed in Detroit. It took its first spin in Philadelphia in 1888, the brainchild of Theophilus Van Kannel, the soon-to-be founder of the Van Kannel Revolving Door Company. Its purpose was twofold: to better insulate buildings from the cold and to allow greater numbers of people easier entry at any given time.

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### Vote "NO" to Higher Sales Tax on May 5th!

The Green Party of Michigan (GPMI) has taken a unanimous stand urging Michigan citizens to vote NO on Tuesday, May 5 and reject a Constitutional amendment which would raise state sales and use taxes from 6% to 7%. The amendment is part of a plan passed by the Legislature at the last minute in December's lame-duck session that would also shift transportation funding and delete higher education from

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### Protesters March on WSU Campus for Minimum Wage Raise

Wayne State became the marching grounds for Detroit unions and activists during the D15 rally, a protest for minimum wage in fast food restaurants to be raised to fifteen dollars. Fast food workers in the United States have protested the minimum wage to be raised since 2012, and the Detroit rally was one among many across the world on April 15.

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AP Photo/Patrick Semansky



## Baltimore News

### Baltimore Green Party Urges Continued Protest In Response To Police Violence

The Baltimore Green Party stands in solidarity with those protesting the police killing of Freddie Gray. The party hopes that protests will remain peaceful and achieve their goal of shining a national spotlight on the need for police conduct reforms and justice for the family of Mr. Gray.

While members of the Baltimore Green Party are participating in local protests, the party continues its strategy for long-term electoral reform by working to challenge city and state officials who fail to protect the citizens of the City of Baltimore.

According to an investigation by The Baltimore Sun, nearly \$6 million in city funds have been paid in the last five years to settle over 100 lawsuits alleging police brutality and other misconduct by Baltimore police officers. The Green Party's electoral strategy seeks to elect

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### One-Third of Baltimore Residents Can't Afford Ever-Increasing Water Rates

A Food & Water Watch research brief released today finds that Baltimore's current water shutoff campaign is indicative of bigger issues for the city: one-third of the city's residents cannot afford water and sewer service. Because of this lack of affordability, ever-increasing water rates, and inaccessible, insufficient assistance to low-income residents, the city risks violating the human right to water by shutting off water service to households unable to pay these rates.

Food & Water Watch's analysis highlights a startling statistic: while the United Nations has established that affordable water and sanitation service should be no more than 3 percent of household income, one-third of Baltimore households earned less than \$25,000 per year, yet paid an average of \$804 per year on water and sewer services as of April 2015.

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### Public Education's Fututre Being Sold to Corporate America

On Friday, a member of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit School Children policy subcommittee, Simone Lightfoot, announced her resignation. Lightfoot, an Ann Arbor Board of Education trustee, did so, she said, because it became clear to her that the Snyder administration would never accept the policy recommendations coming from their group, which had been called together to objectively assess the state of education in Detroit and help plot a path forward that would work for the benefit of the City's children. "Rather

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### Michigan Welfare Rights Organization Event

Good Afternoon, All! Please see new updates and information relative to the growing "INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ON WATER, SANITATION, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING!!" These are points that you will need to know as you make your plans to get to the Gathering:

1) Event dates and times: Friday, May 29, Sat, May 30, Sun May 31st; (SKYPE arrangements are being made to memorialize and share this event for those unable to arrive across the

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### Illinois Green Party Spring Membership Meeting a Success

The Illinois Green Party's Spring membership meeting, held April 18th in Urbana, was a positive and productive experience. The party approved a process for voting on a new platform (see below), held a very informative panel of Illinois Green Party officeholders, approved a proposal to join the LaSalle Street Tax Campaign (in support of H.B. 106) to address the state's budget crisis, and held informative workshops on its new NationBuilder

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### United States Social Forum June 24-28th

The US Social Forum (USSF) is a movement building process. It is not a conference but it is a space to come up with the peoples' solutions to the economic and ecological crisis. The USSF is the next most important step in our struggle to build a powerful multi-racial, multi-sectoral, inter-generational, diverse, inclusive, internationalist movement that transforms this country and changes history. We must declare what we want our world to look like and we must start planning the path

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