



For Immediate Release

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For More Information

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Summit Leverages Local and National Leadership to Create Educational Change in Detroit

Explores best practices and opportunities to create skilled workforce

DETROIT – The Greater Detroit Chapter of the National Congress of Black Women will address the city’s educational crisis by bringing together local and national stakeholders, teachers, parents, and education activists at an education summit on **May 1**, to explore 21st century tools and resources to transform the educational system into one that works.

“We are engaging the community on all levels because everyone adds value to the conversation,” said Donyale Atara, NCBW president. “The viability of our city and region will be determined by how well our children are educated and challenged.”

“The Urgency of Now!” held in partnership with the Freedom Institute and the NAACP Detroit Chapter, takes place at Cobo Hall from **10 a.m.-3 p.m.** The event will feature two panel discussions, *The Urgency of Now* and *What is Reform?*

The panel consists of educators, business leaders, nonprofit organizations, education activists, and elected officials who will use their expertise to tackle the issues affecting Detroit’s failing education system and examine the need for a skilled workforce to help right-size Detroit’s fragile economy.

“We have to address this issue as a collective group and look at how we can begin to turn this thing around,” said Congressman John Conyers, event chair. “We can’t afford to miss this opportunity to give our youth the skills they need to be part of a global economy and participate in new, emerging industries.”

Director of Community Outreach Domenic Giandomenico, from the U.S. Chamber’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce, will jump-start the *Urgency of Now* panel with a presentation of the “Leaders and Laggards” report – a state-by-state report card on the innovation and performance of the education systems of all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The report examines the impact between poor academic performance and its effect on the national economy.

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“We are providing an opportunity for the community to really come together and hear key data from national stakeholders signaling the need for change,” said Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, NCBW education chair. “Hopefully, this will allow our community to look at the information from a critical perspective and begin making informed decisions that can move us forward.”

Event organizers also hope to overcome barriers that prevent Detroiters from working together as a community. Gay-Dagnogo said her research uncovered hidden perceptions about the word “reform” that creates road blocks for transformation.

“To some it means privatization or government take-over; to others it means applying best practices and innovation to redesign a failing system,” said Gay-Dagnogo. “I am hoping this discussion will put us on the same page. Whether you say reform or transformation, I believe we are all for improving Detroit’s schools.”

The meeting will conclude with a presentation from Alberto Retana, U.S. Department of Education's director of community outreach, on the Obama administration’s blueprint for revising the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which would ask states to adopt college and career-ready standards and rewards for schools producing dramatic gains in student achievement.

The event is sponsored by the Skillman Foundation, Comcast Cable, Comerica Bank and the Bing Fund.

Registration is free and is available at www.ncbwgreaterdetroit.org or call: (313) 444-0606.

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