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## OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

### GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER SIGNS NEW VOTING RIGHTS BILLS INTO LAW AT THE DETROIT BRANCH NAACP

**DETROIT** – As we come to celebrate voting rights, please let us take a moment to remember one who stood up for rights of all people, former Detroit Branch NAACP President, Rev. Charles Gilchrist Adams. As we stand here today in the Community Room, named for “The Dean,” the late Congressman John Conyers Jr., we remember the mantra of the late Congressman John Lewis - *“The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democracy.”* Today the people have been given some new tools. These tools will help every community to build on the foundation of a democracy which includes all people regardless of race, gender, location, age, or station. It is important to note that every election has a consequential determination on the people’s personal situation. Michigan has a Governor who understands the necessity to provide access, information, and protection for those in the family of Michiganders who seek to exercise their voting franchise. The Michigan House of Representatives, under Speaker Joe Tate, and the Michigan Senate, under the Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, have been consistent in moving legislation forward from the floor of the House to the halls of the Senate, to the desk of our Governor. A special thanks to Representative Penelope Tsernoglou, Senator Jeremy Moss, and others for sponsoring such important and critical bills for the benefit of our community. We salute both House and Senate leaders who have stepped up to use their political position to make much better the social and civic condition of the people they serve. Secretary Joycelyn Benson has been a champion for voter mobilization and protection. There have been those who have tried to intimidate her, but they have never been successful at unmotivating her to do the work of the people. The NAACP has maintained for the past 114 years as one of its highest priorities the right to vote. Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who escaped a plot to kidnap, try, and ultimately sentence her, has not wavered. “Big Gretch” has used her pen well. Michigan has moved towards the top of those states that have an exemplary rank as it relates to voter access, registration, and participation.

I have never forgotten the words of the late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, when speaking to the people in communities around America, *“The one thing you got going is your one vote.”* Today, we are reminded once again of the one thing that we all got going and that is of course our one vote. There can be no rhyme or reason for any excuse in the state of Michigan for us to sit out any election. The barriers are being knocked down and the doors are being made to stand wide open, thanks to a Michigan led by folks who use their power for the people and who do not use their power against the people. When we thrive together, we all can win. From here in Southeast Michigan to the Upper Peninsula, the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ring true, *“If democracy is to have breadth of meaning, it is necessary to adjust this inequity. It is not only moral, but it is also intelligent. We are wasting and degrading human life by clinging to archaic thinking.”* Thank you, Madame Governor, and to our state legislature, for moving us away from the archaic thinking of the past. Now it is time for the people to **Take Their Soles to the Poles and Vote** like their lives depend upon it because quite frankly, they do.

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