

racketeering against DCHC. Documentation distributed by FDR-PAC included an affidavit by an experienced forensic accountant, concluding that DCHC “short-changed” a Boston hospital by more than \$12 million.

“The allegations made against Doctors Community Healthcare Corporation are unfounded and false,” the March 29 *Times* quoted Sharon Kirsch, DCHC’s vice-president of corporate communication. “We continue to be excited about the opportunity to work with the . . . board to maintain the Aliquippa Hospital as a viable part of this community.”

## DCHC Lies Exposed

The article in the March 30-31 *Times*, ostensibly a vigorous defense of DCHC, sealed its doom. Besides ignoring the bankruptcy and massive cut backs in hospitals under its control, DCHC’s Kirsch and NCFE both falsely claimed that both the Boston lawsuit against them, and the affidavit charging them with a \$12 million embezzlement, had been “withdrawn.” In fact, the only item withdrawn was a request to the court for an injunction freezing DCHC/NCFE bank accounts. The suit, and the affidavit, are both still before the court.

On April 3, Dr. Sangodeyi issued a statement of solidarity with the movement to save D.C. General, which was read at a mass meeting in Washington that night. Referring to the Aliquippa board’s narrow vote to retain Doctors Community, he said, “We are now fighting to reverse this decision, and welcome your support. Our common fight to stop the looting and destruction of public hospitals, is a fight to restore the principle of the General Welfare to government. With so many lives at stake, failure is not an option.”

Also that evening, several doctors met with the Aliquippa board, to express their opposition to DCHC. The board reportedly assured them that the contract with DCHC would last for *one month* only, and tried to downplay any influence DCHC would have over the hospital. Sources close to the board confirm that the attitude of Doctors Community personnel themselves, combined with the FDR-PAC exposé, had set off alarm bells among board members.

“They were really incompetent and disorganized,” said one informed source. “They were so enthusiastic about the hospital at the beginning, but once they thought they had the contract, they became “Doubting Thomases.” The board had a bad experience with a management company before, that was out to drain money from the hospital. This started looking similar.”

After the April 6 unanimous vote to cancel the agreement with DCHC, the Aliquippa board sent a very diplomatic note to DCHC, offering thanks and appreciation.

“The board wanted to part with them on a friendly basis,” *EIR* was told. “They don’t want to risk any lawsuits.”

“We hope that officials of Washington, D.C. will decide to implement a similar happy solution to the D.C. General situation,” concluded Dr. Wilcox.

# Michigan Leaders Fight for a National Principle

by Marianna Wertz

An extraordinary mobilization is being conducted in the state of Michigan, to save a public hospital 2,000 miles away, in Washington, D.C. The extent and passion of this mobilization—including leading political figures in the state—sets an example as a fight for what Lyndon LaRouche has raised again as “the principle of the General Welfare.” Michigan leaders have intervened in Washington, and know they are opposing the fascist policies of a financial oligarchy, best epitomized by *Washington Post* publisher Katharine Graham’s Federal City Council’s plot to shut down D.C. General Hospital.

Michiganders are especially motivated in this fight by the fact that it is two Michigan Congressmen who represent the opposite poles on the D.C. General issue. It was Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-14th), who convened the extraordinary March 22 Congressional briefing on “National Public Hospital Safety Net in Crisis; D.C. General In Focus”(see *EIR*, April 6, 2001), which exposed, on Capitol Hill, the genocidal implications of shutting down D.C. General. And it is Michigan Rep. Joseph Knollenberg (R-11th), who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, which controls the purse strings for the hospital, and whose committee last year ordered that it be shut down.

## State Democrats Act

Just prior to the Conyers briefing, LaRouche activists launched an intensive lobbying effort in Michigan, as well as in Wisconsin, contacting key political and trade-union leaders to urge them to join the fight. A 15-person team met with 45 legislators or their aides. Since that time, there has been an unprecedented level of activity, including the following recent developments:

- On March 28, the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus (19 state representatives and four state senators) sent a letter to Representative Knollenberg, with copies to Representative Conyers, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Eddie Bernice-Johnson, and D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton. The Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus sent a similar letter to Wisconsin Sen. Herb Kohl, who is on the D.C. Appropriations Committee. Both letters called the threatened closing of D.C. General “an egregious act with dire medical consequences,” and demanded that the hospital be kept open and restored to its full operational capability.

- On April 4, Michigan State Rep. LaMar Lemmons III

**The "MIGHTY"**  
**13th Congressional District Democratic Organization**  
 P.O. Box 316 - Wayne, Michigan 48184  
**Congressman Lynn Rivers**  
 Chairperson - Carol Larkin      Vice Chairperson - Rosalee Peterson  
 Recording Secretary - Nanda Nico      Corresponding Secretary - Barbara Blask  
 Treasurer - Debbie Handley

April 5, 2001

Mr. Mark Brewer, Chair  
 Michigan Democratic Party  
 606 Townsend  
 Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Mr. Brewer:

At our general membership meeting on April 4, 2001, we unanimously adopted the attached resolution in support of keeping D.C. General Hospital open and continuing the public funding of the facility.

We would like this resolution to be considered by the resolutions committee.

Democratically yours,

*Carol S. Larkin*  
 Carol S. Larkin, Chair  
 13th Congressional District Democratic Organization

2 Enclosures  
 csl

**The "MIGHTY"**  
**13th Congressional District Democratic Organization**  
 P.O. Box 316 - Wayne, Michigan 48184  
**Congressman Lynn Rivers**  
 Chairperson - Carol Larkin      Vice Chairperson - Rosalee Peterson  
 Recording Secretary - Nanda Nico      Corresponding Secretary - Barbara Blask  
 Treasurer - Debbie Handley

April 5, 2001

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg  
 2349 Rayburn Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Knollenberg:

The members of the 13th Congressional District Democratic Organization are writing you concerning the planned closing of D.C. General. At our general membership meeting on April 4, 2001, they unanimously adopted a resolution in support of keeping D.C. General Hospital open and continuing the public funding of the facility.

As chairman of the D.C. Subcommittee on Appropriations, we respectfully request that you vote in favor of keeping the D.C. General Hospital open to the public.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely yours,

*Carol S. Larkin*  
 Carol S. Larkin, Chair  
 13th Congressional District Democratic Organization

pc: Hon. John Conyers  
 Hon. Lynn Rivers

  
**City of Detroit**  
 CITY COUNCIL

GIL HILL  
 President

April 9, 2001

Honorable Joe Knollenberg  
 2349 Rayburn House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Knollenberg:

As President of the Detroit City Council, I would like to express my concern over the matter of the closing of D.C. General Hospital in Washington, DC. With this being the only public hospital in this area, it would hamper residents who are dependent upon medical and emergency care.

Even though management concerns were the reason for the closing, this hospital has served many citizens since its inception many years ago. However, there is definitely a need for a medical facility that needs to be present in the care for indigent individuals.

I truly believe that everyone is entitled to have access to quality health care, particularly children who are at risk. Many individuals are less fortunate and are not able to obtain insurance, or are working and can't afford to keep their health insurance active.

There has to be a way to supplement this hospital financially, so that it can continue to help patients that would suffer if it closed. Once again, I respectfully request that you vote in favor of keeping D.C. General Hospital open.

Sincerely,

*Gil Hill*  
 Gil Hill  
 President

cc: Congressman John Conyers

1360 City-County Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226  
 (313) 224-1251      FAX: (313) 224-4095

*An outburst of support has come from Michigan Democratic circles for the mobilization to keep Washington's D.C. General Hospital open; Michigan Democrat John Conyers has intervened, and pressure is directed to Republican Joseph Knollenberg, head of the D.C. Appropriations subcommittee.*

(D-Detroit) arrived in Washington to participate in a press conference outside City Hall, where the signatures and support statements from more than 350 prominent individuals from around the world, supporting D.C. General as a full-service hospital, were released to the press. Later that day, Lemmons and other press conference participants personally delivered the signatures and international statements of support to representatives of the Mayor, the Control Board, and members of the City Council. In a statement released at the press conference, Lemmons said that closing the hospital denies health care to 135,000 indigent residents of the District of Columbia, "which is tantamount to imposing a death sentence on them."

In an April 10 interview with *EIR* (see below), Representative Lemmons stressed that the planned privatization, shut-down, and looting of D.C. General is similar to what happened

in his district, which includes Detroit, whose elected school board has been ousted and replaced by state control. Now, he said, the state is contracting out school services for profit, to entities tied to the Republican-controlled governor and state legislature.

- On April 5, Carol Larkin, chair of the 13th Congressional District Democratic Organization, in Wayne, Michigan, sent a letter to Representative Knollenberg, with copies to Rep. John Conyers, 13th District Congressional Rep. Lynn Rivers (D), and Mark Brewer, chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. Larkin reported that the District Democratic Organization was unanimously in support of keeping D.C. General open and continuing the public funding of the facility. Their resolution calls on Representative Knollenberg to "reject the policies of his predecessor regarding D.C. General Hospital." If Knollenberg does not do so, the resolution

warns, “then he must condone this action and is also guilty of such action. . . . and if Congressman Knollenberg does not provide the funds necessary to maintain the full service hospital to the public, then he is guilty of murder by his pen, like those whom they convicted at the Nuremberg trials after World War II for crimes against humanity.”

- On April 9, Gil Hill, President of the Detroit City Council and a local radio host, wrote a letter to Rep. Knollenberg, with a copy to Rep. Conyers, expressing his concern over the planned closing of D.C. General and urging their vote in favor of keeping it open.

- Other Michigan media have taken up the fight as well. On April 2, *The Detroit Free Press* ran a prominent and lengthy article, by Washington staff writer Ruby L. Bailey, detailing the fight over D.C. General, with the title “D.C. Public Hospital on Life-Support: Many Fear Poor People Will Get Less Care After Cutbacks, Privatization.” The article noted that roughly 1.1 million Michigan residents are uninsured, about 150,000 of whom live in Detroit, and recalled the recent fight to stop the shutdown of emergency room service at the Detroit Medical Center. Bailey quoted LaRouche activist Lynne Speed, “If health care cannot be defended in the nation’s capital, it cannot be defended anywhere.”

On March 3 and March 27, *The Flint Enquirer*, self-described as “Genessee County’s leading Black newspaper,” reprinted in full, two separate articles on the fight over D.C. General, taken from the LaRouche movement’s newspaper, *The New Federalist*.

## Representative Links Michigan and D.C.

*EIR* spoke to Michigan State Rep. LaMar Lemmons III (D-Detroit) on April 10, about this extraordinary intervention into the nation’s capital. He is Democratic Vice-Chair of the House Gaming and Casino Oversight Committee, and is a member of the House Health Policy, Redistricting and Elections, and Commerce Committees.

Lemmons said he was “very pleased to be in a grassroots effort, and it was the first time that I really had a chance to lobby, as opposed to being lobbied, as a state legislator. I went to the entire Michigan Congressional delegation and lobbied on behalf of keeping D.C. General open and public, and to stop the privatization of D.C. General. . . . All the Congress-people were positive. They all said that they would give continued financial support to D.C. General, and [that] they would fight the privatization, which was our agenda.

“This is also going on in Detroit, at a much slower pace. It also reminds me, with the Control Board that they have, of the school board situation that we have in Detroit.”

Last year, the state legislature removed the elected school board and took direct control over the Detroit school system. As Lemmons explains, “In Detroit, we now have a reform board, and above the reform board is a type of control board, which is appointed by the Governor [Republican John M. Engler]. The purpose of this board was to oversee the con-

tracts and to expedite privatization of the Detroit school contracts. There have been proposals to turn over 41 schools to the Republican-led Edison Project, which is another form of privatization. There have been proposals to take the cap off the so-called charter schools, which are quasi-public schools, but are really *de facto* private schools.

“We are in court, challenging the takeover. It’s in Federal court. We lost the first round, and we’re in the Federal Court of Appeals now. We’re appealing on the Voting Rights Act. They took over the Detroit Public Schools without any legitimate criteria. We did not have a financial crisis, like in many cases where there’s a takeover. We had a surplus of \$90 million and balanced books. We had a \$1.5 billion bond issue, and the governor refused to release the money until he got his people in place, so he could funnel the money to his Republican friends.

“In Michigan, unfortunately, we have a Republican Governor and a Republican Supreme Court majority (5-2), so that even when we end up in the Supreme Court, they are very partisan—like what the U.S. Supreme Court has turned out to be, after Florida. We have a Republican-controlled legislature, both in the House and in the Senate. So we have a real uphill battle, and they are extremely conservative, and they are really anti-Detroit.”

## Shareholder Value vs. General Welfare

Representative Lemmons says the Detroit schools are still called public schools, but “what they are doing is privatizing the contracts, the services that schools provide for the students, such as the computer contracts. We did all our computation in-house on our computer system. Now they’ve farmed that out, and they’re moving to farm out the janitorial services, which was, again, good-paying union jobs, and they’re going to privatize it out to companies which will profiteer and pay the people minimum wage, and still charge very close to the same. The school district will pay the same, and the people they’re privatizing to, won’t be citizens of the City of Detroit, or if they are citizens, they’ll be making close to minimum wage. If they initially underbid what the union would have charged, the difference will be a profit for them. All those are union positions, currently being held by residents of Detroit.”

A good example of shareholder values versus the General Welfare? “Exactly,” says Lemmons. “Also, the principals’ union was the first to be eliminated. They’ve lost their right to bargain collectively. So, the principals are no longer union and are part of management, and as such, are at-will employees, so any principal can be fired at any time, without cause. That was done through the legislature, as a followup to the takeover legislation.”

Lemmons says that he has a good sense of the principle that citizens in Washington are fighting for. “In Detroit, schools ultimately were always part of the state. So they’ve been arguing the old Southern argument of “states’ rights.” So, it’s “*déjà vu* all over again,” in the words of Yogi Berra.