
Interview: Lamarr Lemmons

‘Proud To Bring LaRouche To My Constituency’

Democratic State Rep. Lamarr Lemmons hosted Lyndon LaRouche’s Presidential campaign meeting in Detroit on Nov. 20. Lemmons served in the Michigan House of Representatives for six years until 2003, representing East Detroit. He was interviewed on Nov. 14 by Marcia Merry Baker.



EIR: We are now seeing lots of “recovery” headlines about the United States, played around the world. You know the situation in Detroit and in Michigan as well as anyone. What is really going on?

Lemmons: My constituents haven’t felt any recovery at all. Many of them have given up hope. The unemployment figures are skewed because it doesn’t count the people who are no longer seeking employment. And of course, the state is in a budget crisis, so they’ve cut—they’ve closed the unemployment offices all over the state. Now, you have to deal with

them electronically. And so the unemployment figures are not accurate. I would say that the unemployment figures are probably twice as bad as what they say they are, in the City of Detroit. And in Detroit, they are pretty bad.

EIR: I understand that Detroit showed up to be number one in the nation, as far as the rate of job *loss* in the past three years, by the National Association of Mayors.

Lemmons: That's exactly what I am describing.

EIR: So with unemployment benefits running out, and the state cutting social benefits—child care, and so forth—people actually need food relief in Detroit?

Lemmons: Right. At my former District Office, we disseminate food, and we can't keep it in stock. Our pantries are constantly depleted by individuals needing food. And we refer them to places, and their pantries are also badly depleted. We haven't been able to procure the donations at a rate commensurate with the demand. The demand has increased sharply; and simultaneously, the donations have decreased. So that's a recipe for disaster.

EIR: Besides food, there are the other necessities—medicines, and so on. You mentioned the state budget crisis, because, of course, the state revenues are down.

Lemmons: We have about a \$900 million deficit in the state of Michigan. And the Governor is going about the state to ask the citizens where we should cut. . . . It reminds me of a scene in *Roots*, when they ask Kunte Kente, did he want his genitalia or his foot? So that's the type of decisions we have to make here.

EIR: Even before this, you have been speaking out on deadly cuts, like health care?

Lemmons: Well, they've constantly been threatening to close our equivalent to D.C. General Hospital, which is Detroit Receiving. But, I think the floodgates would open to overwhelm the other hospitals—particularly, the suburban hospitals—and so we've been able to keep that from happening. They just had a \$50 million bail-out, and that's only a temporary band-aid to hold the hospital open.

It's part of the Detroit Medical Center, so the ripple effect would be devastating to the existing hospitals. It's still unresolved. It's patchwork. Somebody's putting their finger in the dam, and *hoping*, until we come up with something else.

EIR: The \$50 million that was advanced to the hospital—that was done this Summer, I believe—how long can that last?

Lemmons: In fact, that is closely, if not completely depleted by now. By the first of the year, they will have to come up with something else.

In police and other services, temporarily, the city has been able to stave off any massive lay-offs at this time. But with



Detroit Receiving Hospital, "our equivalent to D.C. General Hospital" in Washington, has been on the verge of closure. Community and union demonstrations have so far managed to keep Detroit Receiving open, but other city hospitals have closed.

the state budget the way it is, any additional cuts in revenue sharing—money that we receive from the state—would cause additional lay-offs. The unions have taken pay cuts, or haven't received raises.

EIR: One of the Senators from Michigan, Debbie Stabenow (D), during the overnight filibuster/debates in the Senate Nov. 13-14, was reading off names of smaller-sized companies in Detroit, or the outskirts, that have shut down. She read letters from her Detroit area constituents, describing just what you're saying. However, her policy response to all this was to say, that if free trade had been made to be fair all along, then we wouldn't be in this mess.

But you are hosting the spokesman in the Democratic Party, Lyndon LaRouche, who is known for saying the opposite: Free trade would never have been able to be fair; we need economic rescue measures to restore production.

Lemmons: Exactly. That is exactly the type of approach that I think that we need, and which is why I am hosting Lyndon LaRouche, much to the dismay of the Michigan Democratic Party and the DNC.

EIR: One year ago, November, before the last national elections, Mr. LaRouche said, the issue in elections should be how to have a "Super-TVA"—big projects kind of approach. What do you see that meaning for the Great Lakes?

Lemmons: In Michigan, we need to open these factories. Restore production and manufacturing. We need to stop the insanity of this NAFTA. *We need to end NAFTA immediately.* In Michigan, those are the approaches that we need. On the 20th of November, I'll be proud to host and introduce Mr. LaRouche to my Detroit constituency.