

Dear Bankole:

I'm not sure I get the point of this article. The Governor of MI doesn't make education policy, which is the work of the independent Department of Education.

Please let me know your thoughts.

Thank you, and best wishes to you and yours for health and peace in this challenging time.

RT

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Dear Reggie,

I'm baffled by your inquiry to say the least. You don't understand the point of my column in *The PuLSE Institute* when I invoked the most landmark Supreme Court case of the 20th century, *Brown v Board of Education*, the brilliant legal minds of Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, who argued the case and became the first black Supreme Court justice in the United States, and countless other architects of history to affirm black people's right to have quality education? As the president of the American Bar Association, you are arguably the top black lawyer in the country. Marshall, Houston, and others like Judge Damon J. Keith paved the way for later generations such as yourself to reach the upper echelons of society by waging legal battles to secure the right to equal and quality education for black students. Given the weight of this history, I must ask, what exactly do you not understand?

In your effort to inform me that the Department of Education makes education policy, did you read the majority opinion from the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals written by Judge Eric Clay? This second highest federal court in the nation found the proper parties, including the governor, were indeed sued, and therefore responsible, in this right to literacy case for Detroit's black children. Who are you to question that decision?

Your demeaning questioning of my column is the reason why many blacks in the underprivileged class in Detroit, feel that some of us in the black intelligentsia and the professional class are sometimes out of touch with the vexing issues of the day including poverty. If Gov. Whitmer doesn't make education policy as you said, why did she go into Benton Harbor and attempt to shut down the only black high school there within months of

being elected governor? Did you send her a note last year Reggie to tell her she was out of bounds and that education policy was beyond her authority? Did you come out publicly, write a letter to editor etc.. to condemn her actions in Benton Harbor, since she doesn't control education policy according to you? I spent four days in Benton Harbor, where I wrote 7 columns – the most I have written on one subject- forcing Whitmer to stand down. When the pressure was on, she sent me a personal text message on my cell phone at 6:00 AM trying to get me off her back...she didn't succeed. She finally backed off Benton Harbor because some of us refused to be taken in by the trappings of executive power and political expediency.

I'm very disappointed with your question. It is insulting and totally arrogant. You should know that as a writer and an author, I understand very well the politics of language and certainly understand linguistic subtleties. As you know, you and I have been around for a long time in this town and participated in many equity battles. I remember when you represented Mayor Kilpatrick during the **No on E Proposal**, the push to return the Detroit schools to an empowered elected board. Kilpatrick was on the other side to keep state oversight going, and I was writing then, giving legitimate claims to the voices of oppressed- black Detroiters. I remember one of the Election Commission meetings chaired by then Detroit city council president Maryann Mahaffey, when you came in to discuss the ballot language representing the administration....the public was concerned that the Kilpatrick administration was going to make the ballot language confusing to get a different outcome at the polls....so you of all people should know my position and the thrust of my longstanding journalistic work. Like you, I have had a front row seat to the most important issues that have defined Detroit for a long time.

Frederick Douglass reminded us that in the grand struggle for equity, writers, journalist can render the most permanent good.

My work is a continuation of what Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois and others did with their pen and their voice to affirm black humanity, and in so doing affirm our collective humanity. I suggest you review the works of these illustrious black voices who boldly applied political pressure to meet their demands for justice, equality, and basic human dignity for black people. Perhaps then you will understand the essence of my column, and I invite you to keep reading *The PuLSE Institute* as well.

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