

CASE# 13-53846

TO JUDGE STEVEN W. RHODES

DEAR JUDGE RHODES

I BEGAN WORKING FOR THE CITY OF DETROIT IN 1977 AND RETIRED IN 2008. I AM DIVORCED AND HAVE NO DEPENDENTS. MY PARENTS ARE BOTH DECEASED AND MY ONLY BROTHER LIVES IN ARIZONA. I WORKED AS A CLERICAL AND DUE TO THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH CITY OF DETROIT EMPLOYMENT, RETIRING AS HEAD CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR FOR CITY ENGINEERING. A SINGLE WOMAN I LIVED MY LIFE IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY. IN 1988 I BOUGHT A HOUSE IN NORTHWEST DETROIT FOR \$25,000. I DIDN'T BELIEVE I WOULD BE ABLE TO EVER PAY IT AT MY CLERICAL PAY BUT I GOT A PROMOTION TO CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR AND BEGAN WORKING OVERTIME AS REQUIRED BY MY WORK. I WORKED IN THE STREET, OFTEN BY MYSELF, IN ALL WEATHER IF CONTRACTORS WERE WORKING AND SOMETIMES AT NIGHT. DURING CONSTRUCTION SEASON I SOMETIMES WORKED 60-70 HOURS PER WEEK FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN. I INVESTED IN THE CITY ANNUITY PLAN TO SAVE FOR MY FUTURE AND WHEN I RETIRED I ROLLED IT OVER INTO MY PENSION BECAUSE THE STATE CONSTITUTION SAID MY PENSION WAS GUARANTEED. SOME COWORKERS SAID DON'T DO IT AND MANY PEOPLE TOOK THEIR MONEY

NOT DEPLETING THE PENSION FUND.

THEN IN 2007 FORECLOSURES BEGAN HITTING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. IN 2008 THE HOUSING BUBBLE BURST AND I WATCHED THE NEIGHBORHOODS I WORKED IN DETERIORATED AND MELT AWAY. MY NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEW HOMES BUILT SOUTH OF ME WERE VACANT MY HOME IS NOW WORTHLESS - BRICK HOMES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD - BRICK HOMES - SOLD FOR LESS THAN \$10,000. THE BANKS MADE BILLIONS AND WERE BAILED OUT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

I WATCH A REVOLVING DOOR OF VULTURES BUYING UP HOUSES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD AT TAX FORECLOSURE - RENT THEM OUT AND LET THEM GO INTO TAX FORECLOSURE AGAIN. THE WATER BILLS ARE ON THE TAX ROLLS AND AREN'T PAID EITHER.

BECAUSE I WORKED A LOT OF OVERTIME MY PENSION IS MORE THAN A CLERICAL WORKER BUT I EARNED EVERY PENNY OF IT AND HEALTH CARE THAT WAS THE COMMITMENT FOR MY WORK. I THOUGHT I WAS SECURE BUT NOW I FEAR FOR MY FUTURE - THE REST OF MY LIFE. CAN I AFFORD LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE; CAN I CONTINUE TO SERVE MY NEIGHBORHOOD HELPING TO HOLD IT TOGETHER; DO I NEED TO FIND A JOB AND KICK OUT A YOUNG PERSON THAT NEEDS TO START THEIR LIFE.

HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS.

Cheryl Labash