

**NOMINATION OF GOVERNOR JAMES J. BLANCHARD FOR THE
URBAN LEAGUE OF DETROIT & SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S
DISTINGUISHED WARRIORS
AWARD**

Submitted by Bill Liebold

July 1, 2013

Thank you for this opportunity to nominate James J. Blanchard for the Urban League of Detroit & Southeastern Michigan's Distinguished Warriors Award.

During his 25-year career in public service, first as an Assistant Attorney General of Michigan, including with the Civil Rights Division, then eight years in the U.S. Congress and eight years as Governor of Michigan, Jim Blanchard has demonstrated a deep commitment to the advancement of Detroit and southeastern Michigan. This also extends to his post-gubernatorial service as Ambassador to Canada and as Advisor to President Bill Clinton.

As a Member of Congress, Mr. Blanchard's leadership in authoring the Chrysler Loan Guarantee Act of 1980 helped save tens of thousands of southeastern Michigan jobs (Chrysler is the largest employer of African-Americans in the nation). Throughout his Congressional service Mr. Blanchard strongly advocated for federal programs such as WIC, Head Start and the Job Training Partnership Act. He also sponsored and supported legislation to establish the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday.

As Governor of Michigan, Jim Blanchard led the way to Michigan's economic resurgence in the 1980s. His economic development and jobs programs won national acclaim as a result of creating 650,000 net new jobs. Also winning national acclaim were his education programs, one of which, the Michigan Education Trust (the nation's first tuition guarantee program), continues to provide opportunities for students of modest means to receive a college education. His Michigan Youth Corps put 25,000 18- to-21 year olds to work the summer of his

first year in office. Other initiatives that Mr. Blanchard championed as governor to enhance the quality of life in Detroit and southeastern Michigan include:

- the Jefferson Avenue Chrysler plant
- Cobo Hall expansion
- Lodge Freeway Reconstruction
- the financial rescue package for Wayne County
- the Detroit Equity Package
- grants to save the Detroit Symphony, the Detroit Zoo, and support for the Detroit Institute of Arts

Jim Blanchard appointed hundreds of African-Americans, including many of Detroit's prominent clergy, to important Michigan boards and commissions. Over 20% of his judicial appointments were African-Americans, including two Supreme Court justices, Dennis Archer and Conrad Mallett, Jr. Mr. Blanchard was proud to appoint Rosa Parks to his newly created Martin Luther King Holiday Commission. His Neighborhood Builders Alliance was directed at neighborhood improvement and housing, and his Detroit Compact helped the city's youth prepare for college or a good job. Those are just a few of Jim Blanchard's many achievements during a career dedicated to Michigan public service.

Mr. Blanchard also chaired Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in Michigan, resulting in the election of a president with a commitment to urban America who delivered on that commitment.

More recently, Mr. Blanchard has served on the new Chrysler Corporation board of directors as a United Auto Worker VEBA appointee. (Chrysler has increased its hiring in Detroit and southeastern Michigan and remains committed to our area.) He has also been a leader for Michigan in working with Canada to build the New International Trade Crossing Bridge between Detroit and Windsor. This project is expected to generate up to 10,000 temporary construction jobs and approximately 25,000 additional indirect jobs over the four to five year construction period. Once built, the bridge is expected to employ up to 750 full time residents of southeastern Michigan. Additionally, this new border crossing is expected to generate and/or preserve as

many as 25,000 jobs within Michigan, contributing to the long-term economic stability of southeastern Michigan.

In recognition of his strong and effective record of service and advocacy for Detroit and southeastern Michigan, I am proud to nominate James J. Blanchard for the Urban League of Detroit & Southeastern Michigan's Distinguished Warriors Award.