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The Cost of Segregation || Part III: Where We're Headed

Kilpatrick: Change 'has to start now'

By Lisa Zagaroli and Ron French / The Detroit News

Saying segregation is stifling Detroit's revitalization, new Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick will hold public forums to spark discussion of how to close the region's racial divide.



"The city of Detroit and the Detroit metropolitan area will gain tremendously if we expand diversity. It's really time to have a conversation ..."

Kwame Kilpatrick
Mayor of Detroit

"The city of Detroit and the Detroit metropolitan area will gain tremendously if we expand diversity," Kilpatrick said. "It's really time to have a conversation in the region and get on with it."

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Kilpatrick, who took office earlier this month, said The Detroit News' examination of the costs of segregation matched his experiences as a black man here.

"There's an uncomfortable feeling in the city if you're from outside, and there's an uncomfortable feeling outside to people inside," Kilpatrick said. "That's something we need to change, and that's something my being mayor will play a part in. A new generation of people have to start to change. It has to start now."

Kilpatrick believes blacks and whites are hurt by segregation even if they are choosing to live separately. "Inherent in that choice ... is, 'I don't want to live around certain people.' The reasons you're making that choice are what we need to talk about in an open forum.

"I still think it's perfectly fine to live in an all white or all African-American neighborhood, but it's the reasons why we do that I think that really drives the debate," Kilpatrick said.

"Once we sit down and talk about some of those reasons we live apart, then we will get to the deeper issues involved."

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