

Dear Governor Rick Snyder,

Let me begin by saying that I have never visited the State of Michigan. I have no personal connection to the people of the state in which you are currently governor, nor do I have any ties to the people of Flint or an intimate understanding of their community. However, there is one thing that I had always assumed of Michigan, and of the rest of these our Great United States of America: that democracy is still in place. This past week, I was regrettably forced to admit that perhaps there still is a barbaric and inhospitable environment left in the United States, and congratulations; It's your state! I was first introduced last week to the absolute atrocity officials under your control, (who reported directly to you in all circumstances) have committed. Not only did your "Public Act 436" clearly go against the wishes of the people of Michigan, but you stripped people of their most basic right (besides clean drinking water): that of fair and equal representation by way of public officials. Do you understand, Mr. Snyder, that the entire point of democracy is that government is a direct by-product of choice? The freedom to choose an elected official, and to have that choice respected in all circumstances, is the reason America was founded in the first place. Not only did you do away with democracy in Flint when you appointed a emergency city manager, you did away with any and all trust people in Flint have in the democratic system. You have destroyed their lives, their children's futures, and the understanding that they matter, that they have a say in their community and the way it is run. My question for you is this: would you have allowed your children to drink the deadly water spewing from the taps of Flint without taking action? Of course not.

I hope for your sake that you were not aware of the elevated lead levels in the blood of Flint's children, because I can only imagine the guilt that should eat away at your conscience for the rest of your life if it becomes apparent in further investigation that you were aware of the dire circumstances and did nothing to prevent their suffering. To issue an apology is nothing. If you truly do believe that politics and government is in place by the people and for the people, then you will take immediate action to remedy the man-made disaster that you have caused. Your men, Mr. Snyder, are the 'man-made' in that statement. The children of Flint are counting on you. They need your financial support, and they need you to declare a state of emergency in order to allow someone more experienced and more competent with the democratic process than yourself to step in. Otherwise, you will be remembered forever as the coward who left a city of good, hard-working citizens to suffer under an autocratic government. You will be remembered as the man who tried and failed to save face, not as the man who saved his people. Make this right.

Sincerely,
Devin Ward