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**By JAMES W. WADE III**
Staff Reporter

Civil Rights leader the Reverend Al Sharpton visited The Mountain of the Lord Fellowship Church on Copley Road in Akron Ohio last week. Several hundred people showed up to see him talk and show solidarity for Kelley Williams-Bolar, 40.

Last month, the single mother of two children was found guilty of tampering with public records, which is a felony. Williams-Bolar enrolled her children in the Copley-Fairlawn school district in 2006 while living in Akron.

Civil rights leaders, clergy, corporate representatives and grassroots organizations were at the church to hear Sharpton and Reverend Curtis Walker, he president of the Akron School Board. He told everybody that Williams-Bolar job was in tact.

“We welcome her back whenever she ready to come,” said Walker.

Sharpton’s good friend Dr. Boyce Watkins introduced him after sharing a dew words on why they came to Ohio to support Williams-Bolar. The gathering was not planned to simply advocate on behalf of her. The most meaningful truth is that Williams-Bolar is just one person and crusades on behalf of one individual unfortunately have limited societal value.

“We are gathering to support Kelley primarily because the Kelley Williams-Bolar case serves as a microcosm of all that is racially wrong with the United States of America. By attacking this injustice head-on with the community, we are working to strike a mighty blow to the walls of ignorance and apathy that keep systemic vehicles of racial segregation alive and well in America,” said Watkins.

Sharpton said the punishment did not fit the crime for. “There’s something backwards about our priorities,” Sharpton said. His visit was seen as the district challenged her residency claims and won.

Williams-Bolar was jailed for nine-days.

“We talk so much about the Civil Rights Era and forget that it started because some parents wanted their children to have equal education,” said Sharpton.

“I think this woman should be saluted, not arrested,” Sharpton said to rousing cheers at the church, which was packed with people. “This is an issue that everybody ought to get mad about. White, black, whatever,” Sharpton added.

Williams-Bolar claimed there were safety concerns at her house in Akron so her children had to live with her father in Copley. But Copley-Fairlawn hired a private investigator, who recorded her at the bus stop in Copley before heading back to her house.

Sharpton said she was left with no choice but to break the law because it was the only way for her children to get a good education thanks to a broken system. “I think that the issue has gone beyond just Williams-Bolar but gone to the issue of how we deal with equal education,” said Sharpton.

Sharpton also talked about how he got off the plane in Cleveland and someone said “Now, Reverend Sharpton don’t come here starting any trouble” and Sharpton replied “I am not coming for trouble, I am coming to stop the trouble.”

“Our society claims to believe that all men are created equal but all men and women are not given equal opportunities in our country. Inadequate inner city school systems serve to destroy the futures of millions of Black and brown children and we have not yet expressed enough collective outrage to do something about it,” said Sharpton.

In addition to dramatic inequality in educational access, there is also inequality as it pertains to economic opportunities and the criminal justice system. Kelley’s case got my attention because all three forms of inequality played a role in the efforts to ruin her future and the futures of her children,” said Sharpton.

Sharpton is the president of the National Action Network (NAN) which is one of the leading Civil Rights organizations in the nation, with numerous local chapters around the country. Founded in 1991, NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote a modern Civil Rights agenda that includes the fight for social justice and one standard of justice and decency for all people regardless of race, religion, national origin, and gender.

“I think that tonight showed we can pull a crowd,” Sharpton said. “Now we’ve got to transform that crowd into a movement.”

Williams-Bolar was not at the rally.