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To: Rep. Steve Marino, chair, and Members of the House Commerce and Tourism Committee

The Michigan Association of Counties, representing the state's 83 counties and 622 county commissioners, expresses its strong opposition to House Bill 5623, now before the committee.

The addition of sheriff correctional deputies to binding arbitration under Public Act 312 would serve only to make several existing problems worse for county government that already are struggling to balance limited resources with the service demands of their constituents. The bill also would strike another blow against the principle of local control, a principle that this Legislature once held in high regard.

Committee members need to consider this bill in the following contexts:

- Property tax revenues for county governments have never recovered from the effects of the Great Recession, even after the passage of 10 years.
- Property tax revenue accounts for more than half of the General Fund revenue for the average Michigan county.
- Employee salaries and benefits are a significant portion of every county's budget.
- It also has the potential for creating greater disparity between bargaining units within each county.
- Allowing an arbitrator to make decisions on benefits that have long fiscal tails has exacerbated funding problems with post-employment benefit programs.
- Binding arbitration makes collective bargaining more difficult and time-consuming, thereby disrupting the proper budgeting process.

This bill is particularly ill-timed in light of the coronavirus crisis and the likelihood of significant budget and service cuts from the county courthouse to the State Capitol.

We respectfully urge the committee to reject the bill.

Sincerely,

Deena Bosworth
Director of Governmental Affairs

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