



MONROE COUNTY

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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May 5, 2020

Honorable Graham Filler, Chairman
Michigan House of Representatives
House Judiciary Committee
Room 519 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Support of HB 5488

Honorable Chairman Filler and Committee Members:

This communication is written in support of House Bill 5488 that would extend the time to allow Michigan Trial Courts to assess criminal defendants the cost of court operations related to their respective case. The extension would continue what was authorized in Public Act 64 of 2017 and remains vital to provide funding to the trial courts.

The support of this legislation is required in the absence of action to implement the recommendations of the Michigan Trial Court Funding Commission (TCFC). The commission was created under Public Act 65 of 2017 and worked to develop a set of recommendations to create a new court funding model. The recommendations are outlined in the TCFC's final report dated September 6, 2019.

The recommendations of the TCFC provide a roadmap to solve the myriad of challenges that have existed for 50 years in adequately and equitably funding Michigan's Trial Courts. The support of HB 5488 is necessary due to Michigan not having a stable funding model. Further, local funding units under continued fiscal constraints lack additional resources to adequately fund the trial courts. Only through a stronger partnership between the state and local units of government will Michigan realize what other states have achieved in addressing the challenges of not properly funding the trial courts.

What is also important to understand, is that contained within the five (5) recommendations of the TCFC beyond a new funding model, are methods to improve efficiencies through streamlined operations and separating court decisions from any influence of court generated revenues. If Michigan continues paying for its trial courts with inadequate and unequal funding from a broken collection of assessments and fund transfers, the problems of unequal access to courts, court programs and support of court users will continue.

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While the current economic environment we are navigating has impeded progress on work toward implementing the recommendations of the TCFC, I urge you to not stop efforts by simply passing HB 5488 to extend the sunset provision of PA 64. Consider that the recommendations promote streamlined operations across the state and encourage further efficiencies by doing things differently.

As a member who served on the commission, I would encourage you to pursue the opportunities described in the commission's report to improve the manner and methods of funding Michigan's trial courts and the roadmap created to move in that direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Bosanac".

Michael Bosanac
Administrator/Chief Financial Officer