



MICHIGAN
TOWNSHIPS
ASSOCIATION



michigan
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league

November 13, 2024

RE: Opposition to House Bill 4688

The Honorable Michigan House of Representatives
100 N. Capitol Ave,
Lansing, MI 48933

The Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League, and the Michigan Townships Association are writing to express our opposition to House Bill 4688.

In 2024, 72% of Michigan's local governments that provide or contract for law enforcement services face difficulties recruiting qualified law enforcement personnel (Michigan Public Policy Survey, 2024). Local units of government are facing severe public safety personnel shortages. House Bill 4688 would amend the Public Employees Relation Act (PERA), requiring the inclusion of minimum staffing levels as a subject of collective bargaining between a public employer and the representative of its police and fire department employees. These units are eligible for PA 312 binding arbitration where the final decision on staffing levels could be decided regardless of the availability of officers or the funds to pay for such mandates.

This legislation poses a burden to counties, cities and townships already facing extreme staffing shortages in police and fire departments, sheriff's offices and jails. Mandating minimum staffing as a subject of bargaining not only poses increased costs, but also exacerbates staffing shortages and will lead to budget cuts in other essential areas, and eventually mandatory overtime for public safety officers. This also exposes local governments to liability should the staffing minimums not be met potentially due to circumstances beyond their control.

Local units of government currently face severe public safety staffing shortages that will be worsened by the passage of HB 4688, negatively impacting residents of your district. There is already a limited pool of resources to provide these services to residents.

It is of the utmost importance to adequately staff county sheriffs' offices, jails, and local police and fire departments; however, the focus needs to remain on recruitment and retention of public safety officers, NOT minimum staffing.

Respectfully,

Deena Bosworth
Director of Government Affairs
Mich. Assoc. of Counties

Judy Allen
Director – Government Relations
Mich. Townships Association

John LaMacchia II
Director, State & Federal Affairs
Michigan Municipal League