



Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence

**MCEDSV Supports in Principle HB 4676,
Legislation Expanding Conditions for Early Lease Termination**

October 7, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Lilly, and Members of the House Rules and Competitiveness Committee. My name is Elinor Jordan. I'm pleased to be here today on behalf of the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCEDSV or "the Coalition"). MCEDSV is a statewide nonprofit with over 70 members serving survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking in every Michigan county. Our members lead prevention efforts in their communities and also provide support, crisis intervention, advocacy, and shelter to victims. The Coalition supports HB 4676 in principle, a bill expanding the conditions under which an early lease termination without penalty is allowed for victims. We are currently working with the sponsor, Rep. Tenisha Yancey, on some limited amendments.

Domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking are patterned crimes and victims can be particularly vulnerable to repeat violations. Victims, and those who fear being victimized, often must flee, and relocate in order to evade their abusers. When these individuals are tied to rental housing through a long-term lease, they might be forced to decide between remaining in a location where they can be easily found or suffering the financial losses associated with breaking a rental agreement. Given this dynamic and knowing that economic self-sufficiency is critical to survivor safety and healing, MCEDSV worked with then-State Senator Valde Garcia and other key stakeholders to pass the first early lease termination law in Michigan in 2010 (Public Act 199).

In my practice as an attorney supporting survivors, I am indebted to the thoughtful effort that went into existing protections. Just a few months ago, I spoke with a survivor of domestic violence who was literally standing with her belongings on the sidewalk wondering what to do.

The person who harmed her was going to be released at any moment and she could not afford to pay rent on more than one apartment. When I informed her that Michigan law offered a protection where she could seek lease termination, I could feel the relief wash over her through the phone—she could finally seek safety. Make no mistake—these protections save lives.

The Coalition is grateful to Rep. Yancey for her interest in strengthening these protections via HB 4676. We have recommended some minor edits to ensure that the new provisions do not unintentionally diminish existing protections and to ensure consistency with other provisions of Michigan law. Rep. Yancey has been open and receptive to these proposed changes, and we look forward to finalizing our discussions in the near future.

In closing, thank you to Rep. Yancey for your leadership on this important issue, and thank you, Chairman Lilly, for the opportunity to share our views. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns members may have at this time. Alternatively, I can be contacted at Elinor.jordan@mcedsv.org.