

March 4, 2020

Honorable James Lower
S-1089 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909
JamesLower@house.mi.gov

To: State Representative District #70 James Lower, Chairman Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee.

Please include the following testimony into the records of your committee hearing being held at noon today, March 4, 2020, on SB 712 and SB 713.

We, the past Village Presidents of Hesperia, Arthur Raymond (1996-2000,) JR Derks (2003-2004,) and 2011-2014, Louis Nemastil (2014-2016,) strongly oppose SB712 and SB 713.

For more than 120 years, the General Village Law Act has worked very efficiently. The strong, urgent push and fast pace on these bills by Senator Bumstead is very concerning and a serious red flag. In the Senate, Senator Bumstead never communicated with parties of interest, including the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, the Michigan Association of Counties, or other groups that these bills could affect.

Senator Bumstead is and has been aware of concerns in our village. Despite these concerns from our village, Bumstead, for whatever reason, ignored certain public officials' pleas for help on these matters. He failed to include us and others in Senate testimony. The above-mentioned past village presidents have met, discussed at length, and have complete unity that the bills would have a serious negative effect on small-town communities. The bills would take authority from the voters and put it in the hands of special interest groups. This would give village presidents and village clerks too much authority to make changes to council structure with little or no input from the electors.

Passing these bills would strengthen the strongholds of special interest groups and their agencies that negatively effect our communities. These bills clearly take power away from the people, which our forefathers fought to protect.

Thank you for protecting voters' rights in Michigan

Sincerely,

Arthur Raymond
JR Derks
Louis Nemastil