



House Elections and Ethics
House Bills 4680-4686
Position: Support
May 4, 2021

The ACLU of Michigan supports House Bills 4680-4686, which will require legislators and high-ranking state officials to disclose their finances to an oversight panel or State Board of Ethics. We believe it is a good, first step to increasing government transparency around how and why policy decisions, which directly impact the lives of Michigan residents, are made at the state level.

The ACLU believes a conflict does exist between the need for public information about government operations and officials and the privacy rights of those same officials. Both are civil liberties interests.

As a general rule, the ACLU opposes, broad, general disclosure requirements but does believe a balance can be struck between the values of government transparency and accountability and a right to privacy. First, required disclosure requirements should apply only to employees working in positions that closely affect public welfare, whose functions involve a substantial possibility of a conflict or other impropriety. Second, disclosure requirements should require the disclosure only of such financial or other information as it is reasonably necessary for the discovery of such a conflict or impropriety or appearance of such a conflict of impropriety. We believe House Bills 4680-4686 correctly strike this balance.

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