

Mayor Brian Mar 1

Chairman Fitzgerald, Ranking Member Zorn, members of the committee
- I appreciate your time this afternoon -

Let me begin by thanking my friend, Representative Brabec for her leadership on this issue, and for her continued work and advocacy on behalf of the residents of Washtenaw County -

Members of the committee, I have had the privilege and honor of serving as Mayor of the great City of Saline since January 2013 - I'm at the mid-point of my 11th year. Concurrent to my tenure as Mayor, I have also served as Chair of the Saline Fire Board for more than a decade -

The Saline Area Fire Department has a rich history of effectively serving, and meeting the needs of the broader Saline community - this would include the City of Saline, Saline Township, Lodi Township and the northern half of York Charter Township.

The fire board, the department's governing entity, is composed of 9 voting members - a bipartisan group - in fact, I would be the only self-identified Democrat in the bunch.

Our board works well together, and we put our personal and political interests aside for the betterment of the Saline community.

Additionally, we operate under a intergovernmental agreement developed and approved in the late 1970's - it was a very innovative and progressive concept back in its day -

However, with the passage of time, said agreement, our current funding model, and governing structure are beginning to show cracks and deficiencies - a new course must be chartered for our local fire department, not only to meet the needs of current residents, but also future Salinians, as ours is a very attractive community, which will likely incur rather significant growth in the ensuing decades.

Accordingly, the issue at hand, the proposed legislation, is very simple - changing the wording in existing statute to allow for the creation of authorities, and the ability to service only a portion of a municipality - the genesis, is that York Charter Township is sandwiched perfectly between the City of Saline and the City of Milan - those residents benefit from the northern section being serviced by Saline Fire, the southern portion by the City of Milan.

If this legislation were to pass, it wouldn't just help the Saline area, but likely enumerable communities and regions throughout our state, who, in the future, may consider the creation of authorities in order to provide basic, fundamental public safety services from their respective residents.

Finally, as a matter of principle, I am a firm believer that state government should actively and aggressively consider policies and initiatives that empower local units of government - i.e., make it easier for us to structure & deliver services, while also funding these vital programs that all our citizens rely upon.

Thank you again for your time this afternoon, and I welcome any questions or thoughts you may have - thank you Mr. Chairman -