

Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence

*Representing over 70 Michigan community-based agencies in service to survivors
and promoting sexual and domestic violence prevention initiatives*



House Bills 4670, 4671, 4672, 4673, 4674, 4675, 4676, 4677

As an organization with a long-demonstrated commitment to advancing social justice, the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCEDSV) supports reforms to address injustices across and within societal systems. To truly achieve justice, such reforms must respect and honor survivors who seek safety for themselves and accountability for their offender(s) through the criminal and civil legal systems.

The “Safer Michigan” bills have been presented as one 8-bill package. However, in MCEDSV’s analysis, the bills address three distinct, complex areas:

1. Significantly altering Michigan’s Truth-in-Sentencing provisions
-- HB 4670, HB 4671, HB 4672, HB 4673
2. Amending Crime Victims Compensation eligibility and reimbursement
-- HB 4674, HB 4675
3. Expanding existing Economic Protections for Victims to include eligibility for a broader range of crime victims -- HB 4676, HB 4677

Changes to Truth-in-Sentencing Statutes / “Productivity Credits”

HB 4670, HB 4671, HB 4672, HB 4673

When truth-in-sentencing laws were adopted in Michigan, there was a significant, attendant reduction in the sentencing guidelines. If a “credit system” is re-implemented without revisiting sentence length, then a significant element of the balance struck in the previous processes would be undermined. Further, a bedrock of truth-in-sentencing is to ensure the sentence determined by the judge was certain for all involved, not to be altered by subsequent factors controlled by MDOC.

MCEDSV strongly advocates that any proposal to amend existing truth-in-sentencing laws in concept and/or practice review and address the issue comprehensively, recognizing the important foundational principles and history. Additionally, a broad range of victims’ rights groups must be included from the beginning of the process.

MCEDSV Opposes HB 4670, HB 4671, HB 4672, & HB 4673

Crime Victim Compensation Fund Eligibility and Reimbursement Expansions

HB 4674 & HB 4675

- As written, these bills would seriously deplete the already diminished CVCF fund rapidly placing many victim support, advocacy, and notification programs, along with the compensation program, in jeopardy.
- Significant revisions in the bills are needed and should prioritize reforms identified by the MI Crime Victims Services Commission and supported by victim groups.
- Revisions must be drafted in light of the federal matching fund parameters.

MCEDSV Opposes HB 4674 & HB 4675 as introduced. However, we welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsors, in conjunction with other crime victims' groups and state agencies with expertise on this issue, to negotiate provisions which would allow us to support these bills.

Economic Protections for Victims: Lease Termination & Medical Leave Expansion

HB 4676 & HB 4677

HB 4676 -- Expansion of lease release to include a broader range of crime victims

- Add a specific provision to ensure that nothing in the new section would limit or negate the existing lease termination provisions, protections, and relief available to an eligible tenant under MCL 554.601b
- Notice provisions to tenants should be consistent between existing section 1b and the proposed section 1c. [see MCL 554.601b(1)]
- Remove the term "psychological injury". A "*reasonably perceived or actual threat of physical injury or death*" should provide a sufficient basis for eligibility, without requiring a victim to suffer or prove psychological injury.
- Change the "sexual assault or domestic violence counselor" definition to reference MCL 600.2157a(1)(d).

HB 4677 -- Expansion of medical leave to include a broader range of crime victims

- Section 4(c) should either reference domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking OR strike the words "*domestic violence, or*" (page 7, lines 26-29).
- Remove the term "psychological injury" (see above).
- Use the definition of "victim services organization" from HB 4676.

MCEDSV Supports HB 4676 & HB 4677 in concept. We look forward to working with the sponsors on amendatory language to address the above noted concerns.