

MTA Legislative Alert

May 18, 2007

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Legislation Introduced to Strip Tax Collection, Election and Assessing Functions from Townships and Move it to the Counties

A package of nine bills was quietly introduced late Thursday (May 17) in the Michigan House of Representatives that would mandate tax collections, elections and assessing duties be stripped from townships and handed over to the county. HBs 4780-4788 would require roughly 90% of townships in Michigan to not only send the duties over to the county but to also pay the county for the services townships currently perform.

The legislative package creates in law a definition of a "Rural Township," as those having a population of 10,000 or less or those having a population of 10,000 or more but less than 20,000 that do not provide for and make available fire and police service on a 24-hour basis either through contracting for or directly employing personnel, water to 50% or more of its residents and sewer services to 50% or more of its residents. After December 31, 2008, all "Rural Townships" would be required to send tax collections, elections and assessing functions of the township to the county. Primary sponsor of the package, Rep. Paul Condino (D-Southfield), said that his legislation is "thinking outside of the box." Conveniently Rep. Condino and other sponsors of the package do not represent any townships.

These bills are a direct attack on township government in Michigan. Townships are the most efficient form of local government and these bills represent a clear lack of understanding by legislators in Lansing about what a bargain township government really is. MTA is asking township officials to immediately contact their state representative as well as Rep. Condino, the bill sponsor, to voice their outrage over these bills and to explain how there is no cost savings to the state or local government by moving these functions to the county.

Please use the following link to review contact information for legislators <http://www.house.mi.gov/replist.asp>. The bills have been referred to the House Intergovernmental, Urban and Regional Affairs Committee. Please watch for future alerts regarding updates on these bills. MTA has already been in contact with numerous legislators and will continue to do so next week. We appeal to you to make immediate contact with your state representative.

Attached, you will find a copy of the statement issued Friday by David Bertram regarding this matter.

If you have any questions, please contact David Bertram at david@michigantownships.org or phone (517) 321-6467.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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House Legislation Wrongfully Attacks Townships

Lansing, MI – Michigan Townships Association Legislative Liaison David Bertram issued the following statement in response to the introduction of House Bill 4780, and companion bills:

“The House Democratic plan introduced Thursday is an absolute direct attack on township government. MTA is outraged and disappointed by the introduction of this legislation. Furthermore, the manner in which this was introduced—without any dialogue or warning—is insulting.

“HB 4780 is radical legislation that strips more than 90 percent of the state’s townships of tax collections, elections and assessing.

“Townships are being singled out and are being wrongfully used as a scapegoat for a change in structure of local government. Yet township government is proven to be the most efficient and effective form of local government. There is no evidence of a cost savings by moving tax collections, elections and assessment to the counties; in fact, it will likely increase costs.

“More than 50 percent of the state’s population lives in townships; yet townships spend one-eighth the amount of cities on providing services to residents. Does the Legislature have no understanding of the complications and impact this rash decision could have on the everyday lives of families?

“This package shows a lack of respect and appreciation for dedicated public servants who serve not for a paycheck or the power, rather they serve because they care about the community they call home.”

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