



I am the new Director of the Center for Civil Justice, a non-profit law firm representing poor people in Michigan. While new to the Center, I have been working in legal services for poor persons for 40 years and for the last 29 years. I have been the Director of Legal Services of Eastern Michigan. In those roles, I have extensive background working with poor people.

I am here to express my opposition to SB 275. I could talk about the demeaning requests of the poor regarding drug testing, but I am not going to do that. Rather I would like to talk about legislating through research. In this case, research regarding costs and effectiveness.

The experience in Utah is illustrative. Utah instituted drug testing based on questionnaires, just as SB 275 does. In Utah they found only 12 people who tested positive. A similar program in Tennessee was implemented. Out of 812 people screened through a questionnaire, only 1 person was positive. In Florida, they tested over 4000 people and found only 108 who tested positive.

The national average of persons using drugs in the United States is just under 9%. However, experience in other states shows the use of drugs to be much less than that for welfare recipients. In Florida, it was 2.6%. In Tennessee the percentage was found to be one tenth of one percent. In Utah the rate of drug usage was 2.5%. That number was of those recipients tested. Over 4700 people were screened. I have worked for years in the poor community. Poor people don't have enough money for drugs.

Governor Pat McCrory (R), governor of North Carolina, earlier this month vetoed a bill very similar to SB 275 as being "fiscally irresponsible"

The cost estimates on implementing SB 275 range from \$700,000 to \$3,400,000. (mlive, March 2014). Presumably, this wide spread is based on the varying estimates of how many "suspected" drug users are flagged for drug screening.

Based on the vast amount of research that is available regarding this issue, I respectfully request that members of this committee reject SB 275. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Edward J Hoort J.D.
Executive Director, Center for Civil Justice
436 S. Saginaw St. Suite 400
Flint, Mich. 48502
810-244-8044