



STATE OF MICHIGAN
CIRCUIT COURT
SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

HON. TRACEY A. YOKICH
CIRCUIT COURT

Representative Pete Lund
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514

November 5, 2013

RE: Senate Bill 652 (S-1) – Court of Claims Jurisdiction

Dear Chairman Lund:

Greetings! We write in opposition to SB 652 (S-1) scheduled for hearing on November 5, 2013 in your committee which transfers jurisdiction for the Court of Claims from the Thirtieth Circuit Court in Ingham County to the Court of Appeals.

Our primary concern is that the Court of Appeals lacks the resources to fully assume this responsibility. Although staffed by many capable jurists, the appellate court does not have the necessary infrastructure to act as a trial court. As you are aware because of your expansive background in local and state government, there are significant differences in the resources necessary to operate a trial court including access to properly outfitted courtrooms. At a time when we are all focused on better, smarter use of our public resources, this seems to be counterproductive to our attempts to “right size” the judiciary. Giving the Court of Appeals such significant responsibilities at a time when we are reducing the number of jurists will surely affect the timeliness of appellate review on all other matters for our constituents.

Second, in reviewing SB 652 (S-1), we are unsure who will have the authority to review final orders from the Court of Claims. It is rare in our judiciary for judges serving together to review one another’s decision.

Finally, SB 652 (S-1) has moved so quickly through the legislative process, we are unsure of the “ills” it seeks to correct. Perhaps there is another approach that can be considered that maintains our collective commitment to access for all to a fair and impartial judiciary. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Best regards,

Tracey A. Yokich
Circuit Judge

Diane M. Druzinski
Circuit Judge

John C. Foster
Chief Circuit Judge

Peter J. Maceroni
Circuit Judge