

Testimony submitted to the Michigan House of Representatives Oversight Committee
on House bills 5081, 5250, 5251 and 5252

Thank you to the Chairman and to the members of this Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony in opposition to House Bills 5081, 5250, 5251 and 5252.

My name is Dennis Van Dam. I serve as a member of the Ottawa Board of Commissioners, as a member of the *West Michigan Enforcement Team Policy Board (WEMET), and as a member of the Michigan Association of Counties Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. Both Ottawa County and WEMET oppose the unnecessary burdens that will result from the adoption of these bills and the accompanying cost of having another unfunded state mandate that must be paid for by local units of government. Our County Sheriff and Prosecutor also do not favor these measures and I believe their opposition may be expressed by MSA and PAAM.

This committee, and most of us involved in supporting and providing law enforcement in Michigan are aware of the violations and misconduct that occurred in the Romulus Police Department. Several of the persons involved including the Police Chief have pled to charges or have been found guilty, and the prosecution of other individuals in the case is still ongoing. These crimes did not occur as a result of any deficiency in current law. The deficiency was in the character and conduct of those charged.

We all support the investigation and prosecution of any individuals who violate their office, and as in the Romulus case, our State Police and local prosecutor are fully able to do their job without further urging or regulation from the Legislature.

Section 333.7524a; Act 368 of 1978 of the Public Health Code has already codified responsible and workable reporting measures for seized property. The legislation being considered here is not needed to protect the interest of the people of Michigan, and if passed will force law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and others to incur additional expenses and take away valuable enforcement hours that staff would otherwise be able to devote to investigations, interdictions, and enforcement efforts.

State Government has in the past has shown a propensity to attempt to prevent the reoccurrence of a local or regionalized problem by throwing a regulatory net over the entire State, sometimes without due consideration for the burdens and costs that such legislative actions pass on to innocent units of government and agencies. These bills would do just that.

We ask you to support our opposition to these bills.

Thank you

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(*WEMET is a multijurisdictional drug enforcement task force, which consists of five teams and an administrative unit responsible for investigations in Muskegon, Ottawa, and Allegan Counties. The jurisdictions serviced by WEMET are Muskegon, Ottawa, and Allegan Counties. Participating agencies are: Michigan State Police, Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, Allegan County Sheriff's Department, Muskegon County Sheriff's Department, Holland Police Department, Muskegon Police Department, Muskegon Heights Police Department, Norton Shores Police Department, and Grand Haven Department of Public Safety.)