Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the Michigan Municipal League and the City of Hamtramck.

As you know, cities and villages across this state have been struggling with the reductions to revenue sharing over the past ten years. You've heard before, likely from many local officials like me, of the impact it's been having on key services like public safety. We are at a point at which we have over 2,300 fewer police officers and more than 2,000 fewer fire fighters on the streets of our hometowns than we did on September 11th. That number will only grow if revenue sharing cuts continue.

Communities across this state have sought a great variety of ways to solve these budget problems. We've closed parks and recreation programs, eliminated public safety positions, sought concessions with unions, eliminated capital projects, decreased snow removal and road repairs. You've asked us to share services with other communities, and many of us have continued to find ways to do this.

However the last couple of years have been increasingly difficult as we have seen some draconian losses in property taxes. There are many communities across this state whose property values have dropped by more than 20% each year for the past couple of years. This has resulted in an actual loss of revenue in property tax collections for the first time in our state's history.

The combination of these factors makes our fiscal situation that much more tenuous. And it makes our revenue sharing appropriation that much more critical.

Like a lot of communities, in Hamtramck we've been taking the recommended steps to make up for lost revenue--we've made cuts, we've raised fees, we've gone to our employees for concessions, we've sought grants and alternative funding streams, we've privatized services, we've found ways to share services with other communities. Along the way, we've even managed to pull ourselves out of emergency financial status. We are doing our part to build a sustainable, fiscally responsible city. But it is an uphill climb, made increasingly unstable as it seems that with every step forward, the ground is sinking beneath our feet. Like cities all across Michigan, we are facing losses in income tax and property tax collections as residents lose their jobs, as businesses stagnate or fail, as new investment flounders, and as our major corporate taxpayers seek their own fiscal relief. At the same time, our aging infrastructure places increasing demands on a shrinking budget, and legacy and fixed costs keep rising. We simply ask that the State of Michigan not add further to these burdens. Over the last eight years, our little city, with its twenty million dollar budget, has already seen its revenue sharing allocation decrease by over a million dollars. These are not simply numbers to be juggled in a spreadsheet--they represent the health and safety of our families, the sustainability of our neighborhoods, and the hopes and dreams for a full and fulfilling life for those who still believe their place is here in Michigan.

Now in Hamtramck, we think we have a pretty great little city, in a pretty great state, and we will fight with everything that's in us to keep it that way. But we can't fight this one alone. So today I am urging you, on behalf of the City of Hamtramck and of all the cities and villages of the Michigan Municipal League, to help keep our communities from spiraling into fiscal distress. We in public office at all levels share the responsibility of ensuring that Michigan can support healthy, vibrant communities. By rejecting this cut to revenue sharing you can help sustain the fundamental services our residents deserve, and help support the basic promise of a secure and safe environment that will keep residents in our communities and in our state. Thank you.

Darlene Moore - HB 5538

From: "Matthew Maddock" <matthew@a-1bail.com>
To: <dmoore@house.mi.gov>
Date: 3/16/2010 10:12 PM
Subject: HB 5538
CC: "'Matthew Maddock'" <matthew@a-1bail.com>

Greetings Darlene, I hope this memo finds you well. I am a heart patient and cannot attend the Appropriations meeting tomorrow because I have a cardio appointment. I would like to voice my opposition to HB 5538.

I am a twenty year veteran of the bail bond industry and the immediate past president of our association. I am in the "trenches" of the jail release arena every day. I have first-hand knowledge of the additional strife this bill will create for our citizens.

My agency posts bond for approximately 3200 defendants every year and, in this economy, people are having a difficult enough time raising the current bail bond taxes imposed three years ago! This additional new tax will only compound the jail overcrowding issue which will only lead to jails releasing more dangerous people out onto our streets.

Please make this email a permanent record opposing this bill during the Appropriations meeting tomorrow morning.

Thanks Darlene!!

Matt Maddock
A-1 Bail Bonds
Milford MI
248 866 0541

The political consultant, Robert Strauss, was a Washington insider who advised presidents from Lyndon Johnson to the first George Bush. He once said: "Everybody in government [Washington] is like a bunch of ants on a log, floating down a river. Each one thinks he is guiding the log, but it's really just going with the flow."
The truth is—the Lord holds sovereign sway over the currents of history.