

INCREASE COUNTY REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO ARREST AND CONVICTION

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House Bill 4045 as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. Kara Hope
Committee: Judiciary
Complete to 5-5-19

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4045 would increase from \$2,000 to \$20,000 the maximum reward that a county could offer for an arrest and conviction.

FISCAL IMPACT: House Bill 4045 would have no fiscal impact on state government and would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on local units of government. The bill authorizes counties to offer and pay out up to \$20,000 as a reward, but does not require counties to pay out that amount. Counties can decide the amount they want to offer as an award.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

According to the bill's sponsor, offering a reward for information regarding a crime can help lead to an arrest and subsequent conviction. However, the amount that counties are limited to providing as a reward has not been increased in over 70 years. Some believe that if counties were allowed to give out a higher reward as an incentive for relevant information regarding a crime, it would lead to more and better tips about crimes, which would result in more arrests and convictions for those crimes.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4045 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to increase from \$2,000 to \$20,000 the maximum reward that a county board of commissioners could offer for the arrest and conviction, or for information leading to an arrest and conviction, of a person who has committed a crime or escaped from prison or jail in that county.

When the board of commissioners is not in session, its finance committee could offer and pay such a reward if requested by the county's sheriff or prosecuting attorney.

The bill would take effect 90 days after being enacted into law.

MCL 776.19

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

House Bill 4045 is identical to House Bill 4971 of the 2017-18 legislative session, which was passed by the House of Representatives in April 2018.¹

¹ Additional information on House Bill 4971 can be found here: <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2017-HB-4971>

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Supporters of the bill stress that, in addition to leading to more convictions, the increased reward money is permissive, in that counties would not have to give a \$20,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest and conviction. Rather, a county would be allowed to offer any reward amount, up to \$20,000. If a county could not afford to offer a higher reward amount, then it would not have to.

Against:

A concern was raised during committee testimony about whether there should be any cap on monetary rewards. These critics of the bill argued that if some counties wanted to and could offer more, then they should be able to do so.

POSITIONS:

A representative of the Michigan Sheriffs' Association testified in support of the bill. (4-23-19)

The Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM) indicated support for the bill. (4-23-19)

The Michigan State Police indicated a neutral position on the bill. (4-23-19)

Legislative Analyst: Emily S. Smith
Fiscal Analyst: Robin Risko

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.