



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

September 9, 2020

The Honorable Representative Graham Filler, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
PO Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

Dear Chairman Filler;

I am writing to express my support for the bi-partisan package to eliminate mandatory jail minimums that has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration. House Bills 5844, 5854, 5855, 5856 and 5857 would eliminate some of the most common mandatory jail minimums as a way to give discretion back to judges and focus jail beds on the most serious offenses as recommended by the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration. The City of Grand Rapids has prioritized legislation that promotes responsible criminal justice reform including the recommendations that were made in the Jail and Pretrial Incarceration Report.

The majority of misdemeanors in Michigan are punishable by up to 90 days, 93 days, 6 months, or 1 year in jail. The current law generally gives a judge discretion to sentence to any amount of jail time less than the maximum, or to no jail at all and to impose an alternative sentence, such as probation, a fine, or community service.

By removing the mandatory minimum sentences, any term of imprisonment up to the statutory maximum specified for an offense, or none at all, could be imposed by a court. Additionally, current maximum terms of imprisonment would not be affected, and criminal fines would remain the same.

This package will provide critically needed reform to allow discretion in penalties and remove the required minimum jail sentence as follows:

- HB 5844 (Bellino) eliminates mandatory jail minimums in the public health code, for unauthorized use of a professional occupational title.
- HB 5854 (Sneller) eliminates mandatory jail minimums in the motor vehicle code, including for operating while intoxicated and several other misdemeanors.
- HB 5855 (Brann) eliminates mandatory jail minimums in the revised school code, for truancy and unauthorized use of a professional occupational title.

- HB 5856 (S. Johnson) eliminates mandatory jail minimums in the natural resources and environmental protection act, including for various hunting offenses and for operating a boat, off-road vehicle, or snowmobile while intoxicated.
- HB 5857 (O'Malley) eliminates mandatory jail minimums in the railroad code, for throwing a projectile at a train.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation to provide responsible criminal justice reform which is a priority for the City of Grand Rapids. I hope you will support House Bills 5844 and 5854-57 to eliminate mandatory minimum jail sentences. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosalynn Bliss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rosalynn Bliss, Mayor
City of Grand Rapids

C:/ Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Senator Winnie Brinks
The Honorable Representative Lynn Afendoulis
The Honorable Representative Thomas Albert
The Honorable Representative Tommy Brann
The Honorable Representative Rachel Hood
The Honorable Representative Mark Huizenga
The Honorable Representative Jim Lilly
The Honorable Representative Mary Whiteford