

COUNTY OF OAKLAND
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

MICHAEL J. BOUCHARD



November 20, 2018

The Honorable Jim Runestad
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Chairman Runestad:

I write to you today in extreme opposition to House Bill 6026, which creates a Forensic Science Commission in Michigan. This legislation is an unnecessary bureaucratic oversight commission which will add little value to current forensic laboratory practices.

Outside of the Michigan State Police, Oakland County has the only other full-service forensic laboratory in the state of Michigan. The Oakland County Forensic Science Laboratory conducts testing in the disciplines of biology, drug chemistry, firearms and tool marks, latent prints, and toxicology. We also have a full-service crime scene processing unit which is deployed to where crime incidents occur. Our lab services all agencies in Oakland County and partners with other regional agencies and federal partners in need of forensic laboratory services.

Our lab is internationally accredited with ANAB and have achieved high marks for the integrity of our lab's work. The accreditation process is detailed and strenuous. Further, we publish our forensic laboratory procedures online to ensure transparency and to demonstrate the use of scientifically sound procedures.

This legislation would allow for a commission to be formed, conduct investigations into labs, and give the power to issue subpoenas. Any policies or procedures developed by the commission would be redundant and ineffective. Additionally, the proposed commission is heavy with non-scientific practitioners. While these individuals may play a role in the forensic laboratory process, allowing them to dictate rules, regulations, and conducting investigations into the Michigan State Police and the Oakland County Sheriff's Office is unwarranted.

Further, if there is alleged misconduct of a forensic laboratory, labs are subject to additional auditing by the accreditation organizations as well as subject to an investigation by the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

This legislation would be most effective if it simply stated the language in Sec.11, subsections (1) and (2) which requires all forensic laboratories to be accredited.

I urge you to oppose this legislation. If you should have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Bouchard".

Michael J. Bouchard, C.H.P.P
Oakland County Sheriff
President Emeritus, Major County Sheriffs of America
National Sheriff of the Year 2016

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