



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**54-B DISTRICT COURT
101 LINDEN STREET
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN 48823**

**HON. RICHARD D. BALL
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE**

**HON. ANDREA ANDREWS LARKIN
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE**

**NICOLE A. EVANS
COURT ADMINISTRATOR**

December 4, 2018

Hon. Jim Runestad
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: HB 6344

Dear Chairperson Runestad:

I write in my capacity as 54B (City of East Lansing) District Judge. I have served in this office since January 1, 1993.

I was disappointed to learn recently that proposed HB 6344 had come before the Michigan House Judiciary Committee for discussion November 28, 2018. Had I been aware of the Committee's agenda that day, I would have appeared in opposition to consideration of this bill during the current lame duck session of the legislature.

Actually, opposition is too strong a characterization. Premature consideration would be a more accurate description.

Consolidation of the Ingham County district courts has been considered in the past and opposed by the City of East Lansing.

54B District Court Chief Judge Andrea Andrews Larking and I have publicly expressed our position that consideration of HB 6344 during the current lame duck session of the legislature is not required.

Indeed, to the extent interested parties wish to continue their, in our opinion fruitless, discussions while a bill is pending before this legislature or the next legislature, nothing in the proposed legislation prevents these discussions. That interested parties believe the passage of this bill immediately is somehow important to the outcome, the reasons for that belief are a mystery.

At this point, absolutely no information has been generated that would support a conclusion that the 54B District constitutes a drain on City of East Lansing. Actually, the opposite is true.

Nevertheless Judge Larkin and I have said publicly if the City of East Lansing conducts a genuine study as to whether the 54B District Court constitutes a drain on the City's resources, and the City concludes the Court should be consolidated with other district courts in the county so the City can save money, any opposition the judges would continue to have would be pretty weak, given the power of the funding unit over the future of the 54B District Court. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard D. Ball', written over a horizontal line.

Richard D. Ball
54B District Court Judge

Cc: Judge Larkin
Judge Clarke