

INCREASE COUNTY REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO ARREST AND CONVICTION

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House Bill 4971 as reported from committee w/o amendment
Sponsor: Rep. Tom Cochran
Committee: Law and Justice
Complete to 3-11-18

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

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4971 would increase from \$2,000 to \$20,000 the maximum reward a county could offer for an arrest and conviction.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill is permissive; counties can decide the size of rewards they offer in these cases, up to \$20,000.

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. The old adage "money talks" is relevant in this circumstance. The bill sponsor believes that if counties are allowed to give out a higher reward for relevant information regarding a crime, it will lead to more tips about crimes, which would result in more arrests and convictions for those crimes. The effect of catching more wrongdoers would ultimately keep the public safer.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4971 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to increase from \$2,000 to \$20,000 the maximum reward that a county could offer for the arrest and conviction, or for information leading to an arrest and conviction, of any person who has committed a crime or escaped from a penal institution in the county. The bill would take effect 90 days after being enacted into law.

MCL 776.19

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Supporters of the bill believe that increasing the amount of reward money a county can offer for relevant information regarding crimes just makes sense. The \$2,000 reward cap was set 70 years ago. When adjusted for inflation, \$2,000 in 1948 equates to roughly \$21,000 today. Increasing the cap to \$20,000 would fit the intent of the time when the law was first passed.

Supporters of the bill also stress that the increased reward money is permissive. Counties do not have to give a \$20,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest and conviction.

Rather, a county is allowed to give any reward amount, up to \$20,000. If a county cannot afford to give a higher reward amount, it does not have to.

Against:

A concern was raised during committee testimony about whether the bill should include a clause to allow for raising the reward in the future. The law was enacted 91 years ago, and the reward amount was last updated 70 years ago. This time gap is too long, especially when accounting for inflation. Some wondered whether a mechanism to increase the reward amount over time, without requiring legislative action, might be an appropriate way to avoid needing future legislation to make up for a similar time gap decades from now.

POSITIONS:

Representatives from the following organizations indicated support for the bill:

Ingham County Sheriff's Office
Oakland County Sheriff's Office
Michigan Sheriffs' Association

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

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