



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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MICH. CONSERVATION CORPS LEAD WORKERS

House Bill 4431 with committee amendments
First Analysis (5-2-89)

RECEIVED

Sponsor: Rep. Thomas C. Mathieu
Committee: Labor

MAY 23 1989
Mich. State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (MCCC), inspired by the Depression-era national Civilian Conservation Corps, was established by Public Act 22 of 1984. The program hires unemployed young people, ages 18 to 25, and puts these "enrollees" to work on projects to improve and protect the state's natural resources. The program also employs "lead workers," also selected from among public assistance recipients, to provide on-site supervision of MCCC workers. Those familiar with the program emphasize the importance of finding good lead workers. However, it appears that the statutory one-year limitation on the term of service has made it especially difficult to fill lead worker positions in some areas, notably the Upper Peninsula and the Pigeon River area, where the need is high but local population density is low. It has been proposed that the one-year limit be eased for a portion of the lead workers.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Conservation Corps Act to allow up to 15 of the supervisors to be employed for a maximum period of two years, and to allow up to 25 of them to be employed for a maximum of 18 months.

The bill also would increase the maximum supervisory wage from \$5.50 to \$6.50 per hour, and repeal the act's December 1, 1987 sunset provision.

MCL 409.307 and 409.314

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In its April 14, 1989 analysis, the Department of Natural Resources noted that the MCCC employs approximately 500 corpsmembers at 100 nonresidential worksites and three residential centers throughout the state. Of the 500, about 425 are "enrollees," who are public assistance recipients from 18 to 25 years old, and about 75 are "lead workers," who are public assistance recipients over 18 years old.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Natural Resources, the bill would result in a maximum additional lead worker salary expense of about \$20,800 per year. Without a budget increase, this would reduce the number of enrollee positions by two or three. (5-1-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

By allowing a portion of MCCC lead workers to work in the program for more than one year, the bill would ease problems being experienced in finding good supervisors for the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps. The bill not only would make it easier to fill supervisory positions; it would enable the program to make better use of workers who have special skills or who provide exceptional role

models. By placing strict limits on the extensions granted lead workers, the bill would preserve the act's emphasis on providing temporary job training opportunities, rather than permanent employment. The MCCC program has been a successful one: sixty-four percent of its workers do not return to welfare when their MCCC stint is completed. The bill would ensure that this success is not endangered by the lack of good supervisors for local work groups.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (4-27-89)

The Michigan State Employees Association — AFSCME Local 5 supports the bill. (4-27-89)

H.B. 4431 (5-2-89)