

# Legislative Analysis



## INCREASE COUNTY REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO ARREST & CONVICTION

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**House Bill 4292 (reported from committee w/o amendment)**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Tom Cochran**  
**Committee: Local Government**  
**Complete to 10-29-15**

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

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** The bill would increase from \$2,000 to \$20,000 the maximum reward a county could offer for information leading to 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:**

Nearly 70 years ago, the Michigan legislature adopted a statute to cap the amount of money a county board of commissioners could pay as reward money, when they sought the help of citizens to investigate a crime and arrest a suspect. The maximum reward was set at \$2,000.

Today, many county sheriffs report the \$2,000 reward is too low. For example, in Ingham County, Deputy Sheriff Grant Whitaker, 25, lost his life on December 7, 2014, the result of a high-speed nighttime chase on Dexter Trail about a mile east of M-52 near Stockbridge. Investigators, led by the Michigan State Police, opened a 24-hour tip line that received hundreds of tips, leading to an arrest on December 12, and subsequently, to the June conviction and July sentencing of a man who received a 20-45 years in prison. His crimes: first-degree fleeing and eluding police, and driving on a suspended or revoke license.

This case of fatal pursuit was prosecuted quickly, because police investigators received many tips. However, the Ingham county sheriff has since expressed concern that the county was unable to reward helpful citizens for their information, due to the nearly seven-decade-old statutory limit of \$2,000 on a county commission's possible reward.

Legislation has been introduced to increase the reward cap.

### **THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:**

House Bill 4292 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 in the county or who has escaped from a penal institution in the county. The bill would go into effect 90 days after being enacted into law.

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

This bill will allow (but not require) county boards of commissioners to offer more reward money when police investigators are seeking leads that will enable the arrest of suspects in unsolved crimes.

In the fatal pursuit death of an Ingham County deputy in December 2014, the county sheriff was unable to offer much reward assistance, after an active tip-line was established by the investigating Michigan State Police. Instead, Crime Stoppers offered up to \$10,000 as payment to citizens whose information led to an arrest.

This legislation will increase the reward amount available to county commissioners—established in statute nearly 70-years ago—from \$2,000 up to \$20,000.

***POSITIONS:***

The Michigan Sheriffs Association supports the bill. (10-21-15)

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.