



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW • Suite 1150 • Washington, DC 20425 www.usccr.gov

March 24, 2017

The Honorable Tonya Schuitmaker
President Pro Tempore
Michigan Senate
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Tom Leonard
Speaker
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear President Schuitmaker & Speaker Leonard:

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is pleased to transmit to your office our Michigan Advisory Committee's Report *Civil Rights and Civil Asset Forfeiture in Michigan*. The Commission maintains 51 Advisory Committees - one for each state and the District of Columbia. The role of the Committees is to study civil rights issues in their communities and report findings and recommendations to the Commission. On May 23 and May 26 of last year, the Michigan Advisory Committee held public meetings to hear testimony regarding the civil rights implications of asset forfeiture in the state.

The Commission agrees that civil asset forfeiture is a practice deserving of attention by your office. The Commission as a body has not taken up the topic for review, but we welcome the views of our Advisory Committee on this matter. The Advisory Committee noted that while civil forfeiture may be an important law enforcement tool, there remain concerns regarding the due process rights of property owners and the fundamental fairness of asset forfeiture practice. Beyond the Commission, we note that there is bipartisan support for civil asset forfeiture reform. Republican legislators in North Dakota and Texas and Democratic legislators in California have sponsored reform bills, and representatives from advocacy groups around the ideological spectrum (e.g. the ACLU and the Heritage Foundation) have spoken out against the practice as currently implemented.

We request that you review and consider the attached report, also found at:

http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Michigan%20Civil%20Forfeiture%20Report_2016.pdf

The members of the committee are a bipartisan group of citizens in your state. We believe their views are deserving of public debate. We hope our Advisory Committee has been of service and

you find their report valuable. The findings may be found on pp. 20-22 of the report and the recommendations on pp. 24 and 25 of the attached report, as well as in the stand-alone "Recommendations" document attached to this letter.

We have similarly asked Governor Snyder and the U.S. Department of Justice to review and consider the report's recommendations (copies attached).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



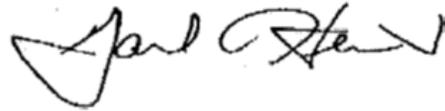
Catherine E. Lhamon, Chair



Patricia Timmons-Goodson, Vice-Chair



Debo Adegbile, Commissioner



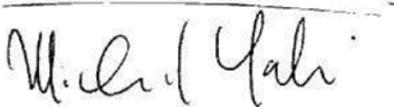
Gail Heriot, Commissioner



David Kladney, Commissioner



Karen K. Narasaki, Commissioner



Michael Yaki, Commissioner

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- Recommendations
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- Letter to U.S. Department of Justice

March 24, 2017

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor, State of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Snyder:

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is pleased to transmit to your office our Michigan Advisory Committee's Report *Civil Rights and Civil Asset Forfeiture in Michigan*. The Commission maintains 51 Advisory Committees - one for each state and the District of Columbia. The role of the Committees is to study civil rights issues in their communities and report findings and recommendations to the Commission. On May 23 and May 26 of last year, the Michigan Advisory Committee held public meetings to hear testimony regarding the civil rights implications of asset forfeiture in the state.

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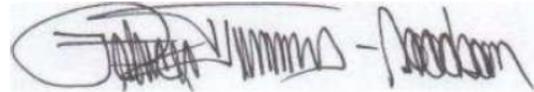
We have similarly asked the Michigan Legislature's leadership and the U.S. Department of Justice to review and consider the report's recommendations (copies attached).

Thank you for your consideration.

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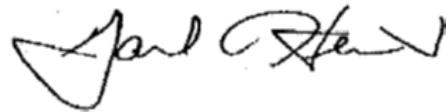
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Patricia Timmons-Goodson, Vice-Chair



Debo Adegbile, Commissioner



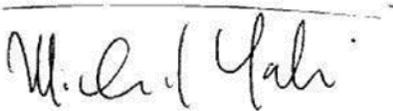
Gail Heriot, Commissioner



David Kladney, Commissioner



Karen K. Narasaki, Commissioner



Michael Yaki, Commissioner

cc: Mr. Bill McBride
Director, Washington Office
Governor of Michigan
444 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 411
Washington, DC 20001

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Letter to U.S. Department of Justice

March 24, 2017

Ms. Deborah Connor
Acting Chief, Money Laundering & Asset Recovery Section
Criminal Division
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Connor:

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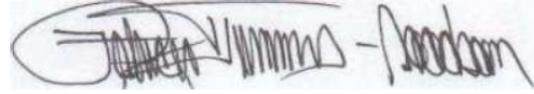
We have similarly asked Governor Snyder and leadership of the Michigan Legislature to review and consider the report's recommendations (copies attached).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



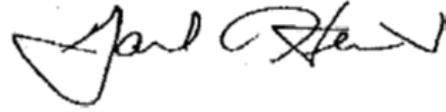
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Debo Adegbile, Commissioner



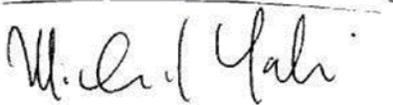
Gail Heriot, Commissioner



David Kladney, Commissioner



Karen K. Narasaki, Commissioner



Michael Yaki, Commissioner

cc: Mr. Kendall Day
Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General

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