

As fines are eliminated (i.e. legalization of recreational marijuana), or have changed drastically based on local enforcement (as we saw in 2019 in Mackinaw County), the identification and enforcement of new civil fines should be used to support the operational costs of public libraries as provided in the Michigan Constitution. We also know that the libraries in these areas are already inadequately funded, with many depending on penal fines as their main source of funding.

The Michigan Constitution directs fines imposed on people for breaking the law to go to support public libraries and MLA opposes HB 4536 because it diverts civil fines, even if they are new civil fines, away from local libraries.

Article VIII, sec. 9 of the Michigan Constitution states:

“The legislature shall provide by law for the establishment and support of public libraries which shall be available to all residents of the state under regulations adopted by the governing bodies thereof. All fines assessed and collected in the several counties, townships and cities for any breach of the penal laws shall be exclusively applied to the support of such public libraries, and county law libraries as provided by law.”

The passage of HB 4536 would hurt libraries, would ignore the intent of the Michigan Constitution, and would be opposed to the will of the people who enacted that Constitution.

We encourage you to make a personal phone call to your Michigan House member to voice your opposition to HB 4536, remind them of the importance of penal fine revenue to libraries, and that the Michigan Constitution states that penal fines should be used exclusively for libraries, and ask them to oppose HB 4536. We will have a template email communication available next week, but for now, we encourage you to call your Representatives. [You can use our web tool to find your Representative's phone number.](#)