

The Honorable Steve Marino
Chairman, Commerce and Tourism Committee
S-788 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairman Marino and members of the Commerce and Tourism Committee:

I started my career at the Sheriff's Office working as a Corrections Deputy. After 40 years at the Office and working every position possible, and now being Sheriff, I see the disparity that exists.

I could never understand the fact that road deputies received Act 312 but correction deputies did not. Both deal with the same bad characters, corrections deputies do so for a much longer periods of time. They both work every shift imaginable. Both cover 24 hours a day, seven days a week along with holidays.

The correction deputies have to deal with inmates with drug and alcohol addiction. They have to deal with inmates who rightly so should be in a mental health facility but are stuck in the county jail due to a broken mental health system. So much more is being required of correction deputies than in years past its time they receive the respect and fairness treated road deputies. It is truly a Profession and we need to emphasize that.

I write to urge the Commerce and Tourism Committee to support House Bill 5623 sponsored by Rep. Jack O'Malley. House Bill 5623 would include county corrections officers in the definition of public police. As a result of a rogue court opinion, county corrections officers are not currently eligible to utilize PA 312. Whether a deputy sheriff works on the road or in the jail they are critical service personnel and should be eligible for the same PA 312 protections.

As Sheriff, this is important from a recruitment and retention standpoint in our jails. All law enforcement agencies are struggling to keep existing employees and find new talent. This is another tool for the retention and recruitment of corrections officers in Michigan.

Finally, as we have seen the past several months during this COVID-19 pandemic, deputies that work in jails have one of the most difficult jobs. Now is the time to fix this statue and include corrections officers in PA 312.

Respectfully,



Sheriff Glen Skrent
Tuscola County Sheriff's Office