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## Comments of Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) on HB 4509

HB 4509 would create a significant exception to the rule that requires corporations to be represented by attorneys in court proceedings. See MCL 450.681 (which this bill would not amend); see also, *Peters v. Desnick Broadcasting Co.*, 171 Mich App 283 (1988); *Detroit Bar Association v. Union Guardian Trust Co.*, 282 Mich 707 (1938).

Summary proceedings already confer a significant advantage on landlords, and this bill would only further that advantage. By contrast, this bill would provide no direct benefit to tenants. It bears noting that Michigan has an eviction problem.<sup>1</sup> Rather than on facilitating evictions, the policy focus should be on preventing them.

As it stands, incorporation provides significant advantages for entities that choose this form of organization. In exchange for those advantages, the law imposes a few constraints on incorporated entities, including the one at issue here – the requirement that they have attorney representation in court proceedings.

Landlords have alternatives to the corporate form. Rejecting them properly subjects landlords to modest consequences, including having to be represented by an attorney in an eviction case. The jettisoning of that longstanding and sensible rule that this bill would accomplish is not merited. MPLP opposes HB 4509.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Eviction Lab*, which shows that 5 of the 21 “Top Evicting Mid-Size Cities” in the U.S are in Michigan: Muskegon, Saginaw, Battle Creek, Dearborn Heights, and Jackson.

<https://evictionlab.org/rankings/#/evictions?r=United%20States&a=1&d=evictionRate>)