Michigan National Organization for Women
1140 Abbot Road, Unit 860
East Lansing, Michigan 48826
(517) 485-9687
www.michnow.org

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Members of the Michigan House Committee on Commerce and Trade
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan

Greetings:

The Michigan National Organization for Women **opposes House Bill 4052** on your agenda today. The bill would prohibit a local government from adopting, enforcing, or administering an ordinance, local policy, or local resolution that contains employment requirements exceeding those imposed by state or federal law.

Typically these local ordinances or policies have been passed because the state legislature or Congress has failed to act to protect Michigan residents from employer exploitation. In Michigan, most employees are at-will employees and can be fired for any reason at all, except where local, state, or federal law has established some parameters. As private sector unionization declines, it is more necessary than ever that the Legislature step in and pass more employee protections, not block local communities from acting to protect their residents because the state legislature or Congress has failed to act.

Instead of blocking home rule in the matter of employer-employee relations, the Legislature should use local ordinances as model legislation and move immediately to amend state laws to conform to what the voting public in these cities and counties across the state are asking for – civil rights protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, for students and others that local communities have identified as needing enhanced protections.

The Michigan Legislature should be on the forefront of preserving families by requiring all employers to provide earned paid leave for family and medical reasons. You should move the 11-bill package on equal pay. Instead of begrudgingly passing minimum wage increases only after petition drives have put minimum wage measures on a statewide ballot, anticipate the issue and set up a permanent COLA system for minimum wage adjustments.

Local communities often see the issue as promoting diversity and tolerance, providing dispute resolution alternatives to litigation, protecting children, providing safe workplaces, and generally helpful in creating a desirable community in which to live and work. The Michigan Legislature should reward and give accolades to these communities, not prevent them from protecting their own residents.

We urge you not to interfere with local home rule on employment matters and vote No on reporting House Bill 4052.

Sincerely,
Mary Pollock
Legislative Vice President

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.