

## **Testimony on HB4344 Arson Investigation**

**Good Morning Senator Jones and Members of the Senate Judiciary  
Committee**

**My name is Carolyn Burns and I serve as the Rep. Stallworth's Chief of Staff. Let me first express his sincere appreciation for taking up HB 4344 and his regrets for being unable to be here in person this morning.**

**HB4344 amends the Commission on Law Enforcement Standards Act to include arson investigators from any municipal fire department in the definition of police officer or law enforcement officer.**

**A dual designation allows the arson investigators to cross train and earn law enforcement certification. That way, the arson investigators can testify as police officers in court, if the county prosecutor brings charges against suspected arsonists. Additionally it creates the following benefits.**

- Effective utilization of police and fire resources**
- Streamlines and expedites the investigation process of potential incidents of arson**
- Facilitates cost efficiencies during times of constrained resources.**

**HB 4344 expands a practice once reserved for cities of 750,000 or more or more specifically Detroit, to all municipalities in Michigan.**

**This bill is particularly important to Detroit given the current conditions we face of managing a preponderance of vacant properties and blight resulting from lost population and the associated public safety exposure to fires which are often the result of arson. The change we are requesting will enhance our ability to protect the lives of our citizens given these conditions.**

**Here with me today is Ken Cole of Government Consultant Services who will provide more background on the importance of this measure.**