

Dec. 21, 2015

Hon. Rick Snyder  
Governor of Michigan  
111 S. Capitol Ave.  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Gov. Snyder,

On behalf of our member counties around Michigan, I write today to convey our opposition to a provision inserted into Senate Bill 571 prior to its passage on the night of Dec. 16.

I refer to the new limitations that would be placed on local units in the performance of their duty to inform their constituents on page 53 of the bill. This unprecedented and unnecessary limitation would create a 60-day zone of silence for public officials on conveying *any information* about a local ballot matter to their constituents.

The Legislature adopted this concept even though local governments already are prevented by state law from using persuasive language to convince voters to approve a millage increase or special millage request. Local units have displayed a high degree of integrity operating under this provision.

Ottawa County Administrator Al Vanderberg has detailed to us how his county consults with legal counsel whenever it wants to communicate with the public regarding a millage matter. Ottawa County has three special millages in place (for parks, dispatch and roads), while another (for mental health funding) will be on the ballot soon. If you were to sign SB 571 in its current form, Ottawa leaders would be barred from briefing constituents on the basic facts in the weeks immediately prior to the election – the exact time when voters are paying the most attention.

And this is just one example of how this bill would harm government transparency and operations across our great state. There is no compelling public interest served by this onerous and ill-conceived restriction.

If this measure is presented to you, I urge you to veto it.

Respectfully,



Timothy K. McGuire  
Executive Director, MAC