

Safe & Just
Michigan

House Rules and Competitiveness Committee Reports Out the Safer Michigan Act

Bills create productivity credits, improve victim support services

LANSING — Michigan’s House Rules and Competitiveness Committee today reported out House Bills 4670-5, paving the way for the full chamber to vote on the Safer Michigan Act. Taken together, these bills would create a system of productivity credits encouraging incarcerated people to complete educational and vocational training in evidence-based programs proven to reduce recidivism in exchange for reducing their prison sentence, and will also bolster Michigan’s victim compensation program. Safe & Just Michigan, a Lansing-based organization that advances policies to end the over-reliance on incarceration and promote community safety, urges the Legislature to move quickly to pass these bills into law.

“The Safer Michigan Act presents a balanced approach to reducing incarceration, supporting people who have been harmed by crime and protecting our communities,” Safe & Just Michigan Executive Director John Cooper said. “When we encourage people in prison to engage in evidence-based programs shown to reduce recidivism, we take steps to reduce crime in our communities and make our neighborhoods safer. These bills also make sure people who have been traumatized by crime can get the services they need to recover, including counseling, medical help or temporary housing.”

Details of the Safer Michigan Act include:

- Incarcerated people can earn up to a 20 percent reduction to their sentence, or a two year reduction — whichever is less — by participating in educational and vocational programs.
- Programs include GED completion, vocational training and re-entry preparation.
- The credits will only be available to people *not yet* incarcerated (ie., the bills are not retroactive)
- Victims of crime would no longer have to show a serious financial hardship to recoup out-of-pocket expenses, lost earnings or support incurred because of the crime.

- Victims would no longer have to report a crime within 48 hours to qualify for compensation.

The changes to the Crime Victim's Compensation Act are necessary because Michigan ranks last in the nation for victims of crime applying for compensation. In a recent [survey from the Alliance for Safety and Justice](#), a quarter of all Michiganders asked said they had been a victim of a crime in the previous decade, but just 20 percent of those people recalled even being told about the possibility of applying for victims' compensation. Michigan's existing 48-hour reporting requirement is also the shortest window of opportunity in the nation and contradicts what we currently understand about trauma and the consideration crime victims put into the decision to report a crime.

"In recent years, Michigan has made great strides toward criminal justice reform, and that should be celebrated and continued," Safe & Just Michigan Policy Analyst Josh Hoe said. "At the same time, we must make sure survivors of crime aren't left behind. Our current services for crime victims let down too many people — in essence, victimizing them twice. We can and we must change that, and that begins with the Legislature passing the Safer Michigan Act."

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Safe & Just Michigan (www.safeandjustmi.org) works to advance policies that end Michigan's over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.