



## National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Lansing Branch

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May 6, 2019

Hon. Hugh B. Clarke, Jr.  
54-A District Court  
124 W. Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Hon. Clarke:

**RE:** Consolidation of all Ingham County District Courts.

This communication is to express the Lansing Branch NAACP's thoughts and concerns about pending decisions that if approved by multiple jurisdictions located within Ingham County would have the potential to jeopardize diversity on our court benches, and also the ability to have diverse jury pools made of the peers of those subject to court matters. The discussions that I am referencing are those deliberating to consolidate all Ingham County District Courts. The driving factor is the attempt to share allocated resources to reduce cost. We concur on the idea of cost efficiencies, but not when the saving measure(s) will come at the expense of losing elected representation for people of color, and the inability for an individual to have a trial with jury pools with the makeup of their peers and the that lack of diversity

It is our understanding that there are upcoming conversations among several Ingham County government agencies that will soon reconvene on the topic of district court consolidation; therefore we want to express our concerns and position on this matter. Let it be known that the Lansing Branch NAACP is opposed to the idea of district court consolidation in Ingham County, which includes similar proposals under consideration in neighboring counties within our service area. Our opposition is based upon the possibility that any approval drafted on this concept will hinder progress in a diverse representation in our various communities, while diminishing the ability for a fair trial for people of color. Elected officials throughout Ingham County who are in support of this measure rest the idea that they can develop procedures and policies to assure diversity and inclusion, and their intent will be preserved, or prevail under test. However, past practices have demonstrated that the interpretation of any passed legislation can differ from election cycle to election cycle, as can the use of funding by any future elected class. Nevertheless we ask that these concerns be considered during your discussions.

Sincerely,

Dulles D. Copedge, President  
Lansing Branch NAACP

cc Hon. Curtis Hertel, MI Senate  
Hon. Andy Schor, Mayor  
Hon. Mark Meadows, Mayor of East Lansing  
Hon. Carol Siemon, Ingham County Prosecutor  
Lansing City Council Members  
East Lansing City Council Members  
Ingham County Board of Commissioners  
Hon. Thomas P. Boyd, Judge  
Hon. Cynthia M. Ward  
Hon. Andrea Andrews Larkin

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