

Resolution in support of Senate Bill 223 to establish the
Law Enforcement Officer Separation of Service Record Act

Whereas, the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners exercises its role of civilian oversight through several charter-mandated functions, including the appointment of the Director of Human Resources for the Detroit Police Department and the administration and operation of the Office of the Chief Investigator, which receives and independently investigates citizen complaints against any employee of the Detroit Police Department; and

Whereas, the Board strives through its appointment of an HR director to ensure that the best candidates are recruited, trained and deployed for service as sworn and civilian members of the Police Department. Through our role with citizen complaints, the Board is able to help ensure professional service to the citizens and the community. The Board also is able to utilize complaint data to help identify concerns for appropriate follow-up by the Department and its command team, which might include training, counseling, discipline or, in some instances, criminal review by its Bureau of Professional Standards, which includes Internal Affairs and Force Investigation; and

Whereas, the Board of Police Commissioners through the years has seen the finest men and women serve as Detroit police officers and perform exemplary throughout their careers. However, the Board also at times has suspended from duty police officers and has rejected or protested the promotion of officers whom Board members did not believe adhered to the community policing standards that honored the DPD badge or the Detroit community. The Board knew, and the consent decree process reinforced, that vigilance to the details of practices and procedures followed by police officers helps establish the culture of law enforcement, and that the small number of officers who do not perform according to standards might not belong at DPD or in the profession of law enforcement. Unfortunately, there have been cases when officers deemed unfit by DPD remained in law enforcement in other communities, sometimes with detrimental outcomes to citizens as highlighted in a special report by the Detroit Free Press on Sunday, July 9, 2017; and

Whereas, Senate Bill 223 will establish a new process to address the problem of unfit police officers moving from city to city to join other police agencies. The bill, also known as the Law Enforcement Officer Separation of Service Record Act, requires all law enforcement agencies to establish and maintain as part of their HR or employment databases a record that states the reasons an officer resigns, retires or is fired from service; and

Whereas, Senate Bill 223 requires the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) to create the release form for such employment records, which underscores their importance due to the vital role MCOLES has in setting and regulating professional standards. Overall, the bill ensures that the official employment record follows an officer whenever he or she seeks another job in law enforcement, a requirement that will help keep unfit officers off Michigan streets;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners supports the full passage and enactment of Senate Bill 223, the Law Enforcement Officer Separation of Service Record Act. Such a new law would help communities by ensuring a more consistent application of professional standards for law enforcement officers and by providing municipal leaders with a better method to identify and deter unfit officers.