



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I C H I G A N

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

March 18, 2013

Representative Kenneth Kurtz  
House Families, Children and Seniors Committee  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Kurtz:

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes passage of HB 4118, the legislation that requires drug testing, based on suspicion, of public assistance recipients. The bill was recently introduced by Representative Farrington and assigned to the House Families, Children and Seniors Committee.

HB 4118 requires the Department of Human Services to make an applicant or a recipient of public assistance submit to substance abuse testing if the caseworker has a reasonable suspicion of abuse. If the applicant or recipient tests negative he/she may receive assistance. If the applicant tests positive he/she is ineligible. The applicant or recipient may reapply after six months if he/she tests positive and has completed treatment. Public assistance means the family independence program, state family assistance, state disability, food assistance program or child development and care program. The cost for the test is deducted from the first assistance payment if the person tests negative. There is no mention of who pays for the drug testing if a person tests positive.

A February 3, 2012 brief by the Center for Law and Social Policy noted a 1996 study that found the proportion of welfare recipients with a substance abuse problem is consistent with the proportion of non-welfare recipients with the same problem. The test costs between \$30 to \$75 dollars.

The League of Women Voters supports administrative procedures that are conducted with respect for the rights and dignity of the individual. Therefore, we urge you to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith, President  
League of Women Voters of Michigan

Cc. Senator Joseph Hune