

STATE SENATOR • TUPAC A. HUNTER • 5TH DISTRICT

Hunter Press Release

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Senator Hunter Introduces Legislation to Reform the Detroit Hardship Panel

LANSING- Tupac A. Hunter (D-Detroit) said today that the recent introduction of his bill to reform the Detroit Hardship Panel will help bring honor back to city government.

“In recent months it has become clear that the Detroit Hardship Panel has not been operating honorably, and has awarded thousands of dollars in tax exemptions to seemingly well-to-do homeowners,” said Senator Hunter. “This is not how city government is supposed to operate, and it simply has to be changed. My bill will do that by creating standards for both applicants and hardship panel members.”

Senate Bill 336 would ensure that help from the Hardship Panel only goes to those who truly need it and meet specific criteria. The bill requires that a tax exemption is only allowed for a principal residence that has a taxable value of less than \$200,000. An applicant could not apply for a tax exemption if they owned any other property. In addition, the bill also outlines specific qualifications for members of this panel. Panel members would be subject to a criminal background check, could not have any outstanding liens or property tax delinquencies, could not be related to a city council member, and would have to excuse themselves from deliberations if they know the applicant. The provisions in this bill would apply to similar panels in any city, and not just in Detroit.

“We cannot let this important service continue to operate as they have because too many deserving Detroit citizens need the help that the Hardship panel can offer,” said Hunter. “This is an important step we can take to improve city government for the people of Detroit.”

Senate Bill 336 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

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Sen. Hunter represents the 5th district, which is comprised of northwest Detroit, Dearborn and Inkster. He serves as Minority Vice Chair of the Banking & Financial Institutions and the Homeland Security & Emerging Technologies Committees. He is also a member of the Commerce & Tourism and the Economic Development & Regulatory Reform Committees.