

Legislative Analysis



FAN FREE SPEECH RIGHTS IN PUBLICLY-FINANCED SPORTS FACILITIES

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House Bill 6466

Sponsor: Rep. Leon Drolet

Committee: Government Operations

Complete to 9-18-06

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6466 AS INTRODUCED 9-12-06

In general, the bill is designed to protect the right of patrons attending sporting events in publicly-financed sports facilities to carry or display signs.

The bill would amend the law governing sports stadiums and conference facilities, Public Act 180 of 1991, to add a new provision pertaining to entities owning, operating, or leasing a sports stadium for which 20 percent or more of the *construction or operating costs* of the stadium are derived from state or local taxes or tax-exempt bonds. **Such an entity would be barred from prohibiting a patron attending a sporting event from carrying or displaying a sign.** A stadium would still be allowed to prohibit a sign that (1) obstructs the view of another individual; (2) is obscene or pornographic; (3) is a safety hazard; or (4) occupies space beyond the area that the patron is authorized to occupy.

The bill creates a cause of action for individuals who are wrongly prevented from carrying or displaying a sign or message to sue for injunctions, actual damages or liquidated damages of \$100, costs, and reasonable attorney fees. A stadium violating the law would be assessed a civil fine of \$500.

MCL 207.757a

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no cost to the state but could result in costs to counties if there are additional lawsuits resulting from the bill.

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