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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN OLUMBA
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

October 11, 2011

Rep. Olumba offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 139.

A resolution requesting that the Attorney General begin an investigation into the Office of the Wayne County Executive and other entities related to the severance payment scandal to determine if any misconduct or malfeasance occurred.

Whereas, The Office of the Wayne County Executive made a \$200,000 severance payment to its chief development officer, Turkia Awada Mullin, when she voluntarily quit her position and accepted a higher paying position as the new chief executive officer of the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport Authority. In addition, a county severance package was provided to her executive assistant who accompanied her to a new position with the airport authority; and

Whereas, The Office of the Wayne County Executive failed to inform or seek approval from the Wayne County Board of Commissioners for this and past severance payments. The county board is responsible for awarding funds and making contracts under the county charter. In addition, the Office of the Wayne County Executive has failed to produce a written contract binding Wayne County to pay these severance packages. An undated and inaccurate letter is apparently the only written documentation of an agreement; and

Whereas, There is at least the appearance of mutually beneficial ties among the various entities involved in this scandal. Ms. Mullin concurrently served and had received significant compensation as the executive director of Edge Opportunities--a nonprofit affiliated with the privately funded Wayne County Business Development Corporation--while she was the Wayne County chief development officer. The vice-president of Edge Opportunities also serves on the airport authority board. In turn, the Wayne County Executive appoints the majority of the airport authority board that hired Ms. Mullin; and

Whereas, Ms. Mullin was selected as chief executive officer of the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport Authority, and the airport authority hired a search firm to find a chief executive officer. This firm, Trust In Us LLC, is a company owned by the same individual who was the director of, and investor in, the Pinnacle Racing Track, a failed project contracted by the Wayne County department that Ms. Mullin headed; and

Whereas, The conflicting statements, questionable documentation, and interacting players have raised significant and legitimate public concerns over the issuing of these severance payments and the general hiring and awarding of contracts and compensation by the Office of the Wayne County Executive; and

Whereas, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy has recused herself from an investigation because the prosecutor's office budget is set by the Office of the Wayne County Executive and her office's involvement would constitute a conflict of interest; and

Whereas, The residents of Wayne County and the entire state of Michigan deserve a thorough and objective investigation of this issue to restore their trust in the integrity of public officials in Michigan's largest county; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we request that the Attorney General begin an investigation into the Office of the Wayne County Executive and other entities related to the severance payment scandal to determine if any misconduct or malfeasance occurred; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of the Michigan Attorney General.