

BACK THE BLUE IN SAGINAW, MICHIGAN

October 2024

SAGINAW CAN DO MORE TO KEEP ITS RESIDENTS SAFE

Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified police officers contribute to rising crime rates and social dysfunction. Police departments and local communities must adopt policies that incentivize careers in law enforcement, support all current law enforcement officers, and promote public safety.

TOPLINES

- According to the latest FBI data, the **overall crime rate** in Saginaw is **79% higher** than the national average.
- The same FBI data shows that the **violent crime rate** in Saginaw is **473% higher** than the national average, with 925 reported incidents in a town of under 44,000 people.
- The same FBI data shows that the **property crime rate** in Saginaw is **4.9% higher** than the national average, with 895 reported incidents in a town of under 44,000 people.
- Police departments across Michigan are grappling with officer recruitment and retention issues.
 - Between 2001 and 2023, the number of police officers in the state **declined by 19%**.
 - This decline is particularly concerning for cities like Saginaw, where crime continues to exceed national averages.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO AID RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- State and local policymakers should **provide financial incentives** to encourage qualified applicants to pursue a career in law enforcement, including non-salary benefits, such as college tuition reimbursement and additional life insurance.
- With support from their state and local officials, law enforcement leadership should **improve retention through financial incentives** such as bonuses for longevity or night differential pay, enhanced work-life balance measures such as flexible shift options, increased time off, and work-from-home opportunities for administrative roles.
- Veteran law enforcement officers should **provide new recruits with realistic expectations** about the job and offer resources, such as counseling services, to help them navigate the difficulties.
- Federal policymakers should **increase Department of Justice grant funding** to assist state and local agencies in hiring and retaining new police officers.

SAGINAW CAN BACK THE BLUE ON THE BALLOT THIS NOVEMBER

- The city's proposed **Back the Blue charter amendment** aims to "make public safety a top priority" and "encourage more recruitment and retention" of law enforcement in the city by:
 - Prioritizing more training and equipment for all first responders;
 - Providing additional life insurance and other benefits for families; and
 - Increasing penalties for anyone who injures or kills a first responder.