



**Immediate Release**

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## **Detroit Youth Ask the Questions at Special Candidate Forum for State House Districts on Thursday, July 7**

### ***Michigan's Children and The Children's Center Team Up for Debate***

**Detroit, Mich.** – [Michigan's Children](#) and [The Children's Center](#) will team up to host a candidate forum featuring Detroit youths as the panel of questioners and the state House candidates that want to represent them beginning at **6 p.m. on July 7**. The forum is open to the public and takes place at the Center, **79 Alexandrine West in Detroit**.

What sets this forum apart from traditional ones is that youth who've experienced foster care, poverty, and trauma will be in the driver's seat, framing questions on issues that impact their lives, including the fate of Detroit Public Schools, neighborhood safety, and access to voting rights, said Michigan's Children's CEO & President Matt Gillard.

"Unfortunately, candidates do not typically address specific issues that matter to children, youth and families while campaigning," Gillard said. "This Detroit forum – with candidates in competitive Democratic primaries in four House districts – is the first of several youth-led forums we're sponsoring across the state in 2016."

Media celebrity [Charlie Langton](#), a broadcaster for WJBK Fox-2 and WWJ Newsradio 950, has agreed to moderate.

Invited are Democratic candidates in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> District House races where primary winners are likely to succeed in November because of traditional voting preferences of the districts. Those expressing interest in participating so far include: **Angles L. Hunt, Joseph Tate and Carla Tinsley-Smith** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> House District; **Jumar Motley** in the 4<sup>th</sup> House District; and **Stephanie Chang and David Sanchez** in the 6<sup>th</sup> House District.

Michigan's Children, a statewide public policy and advocacy organization focused on all children, youth and families, is hosting the forums through its election advocacy arm, the non-partisan Michigan's Children's Sandbox Party. The program was created to make kids the priority during election seasons by elevating their issues with candidates and engaging the electorate.

Carlynn D. Nichols, chief clinical officer of The Children's Center, said the July 7 panel will include young people, 16 to 23, representing youth groups including Youth United, Youth MOVE Detroit and 21<sup>st</sup> Century All Starts.

“This forum teaches at-risk youth that they do have a voice,” she said. “It’s a terrific opportunity to hone their leadership skills, gain a better understanding of our democratic process, and engage with political candidates who want to represent them.”

Gillard added: “Kids deserve to be heard by their decision-makers and those setting policies that impact them in Lansing and Washington, D.C. Before we send any more leaders to Lansing, the candidates need to hear what’s on their minds.”

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*Founded in 1929 by former Detroit Mayor and United States Senator James Couzens as one of the first child guidance centers in the United States, **The Children's Center** has grown to be the Michigan child and family agency offering the largest number of specialized therapy programs for at-risk children and youth. It serves more than 7,500 children and families annually through behavioral, social and emotional health services.*



Developing Strong Children  
and Successful Families



**21st Century Community Learning Centers Program** is an after-school program which delivers youth development, enrichment, and academic services to middle school students in Detroit Public Schools.



**Youth M.O.V.E. Detroit** is a youth-led organization devoted to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of youth who have lived experience in various systems, including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare.

**Youth United** is a youth leadership initiative that promotes youth voice and youth partnerships in Wayne County Systems of Care using positive youth development values and philosophy in an effort to move toward a youth-driven system of care and a more youth-friendly environment throughout Community Mental Health agencies.

