



Public policy
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Young People from Peckham and Highfields Host Candidate Forum for Federal, State Office-Seekers at LCC – West Campus on Sept. 19

(Lansing, Mich.) The stage is set for one of the most distinctive candidate forums in Lansing, bringing federal and state office-seekers together with local young people, some with court experience and other challenges. The youth, ages 14-24, are students at [Peckham Youth Services, Inc.](#), a vocational rehabilitation program, and [Highfields, Inc.](#), a provider of counseling and services for youth and families. The nonprofit public policy and advocacy organization, [Michigan's Children](#), is also a co-sponsor.

The event will take place on **Monday, Sept. 19, 2022 (4 pm to 6 pm) in the auditorium at Lansing Community College – West Campus, 5708 Cornerstone Drive, Lansing, Mich. 48917.**

Organizers have invited candidates from the newly drawn **7th Congressional District, the 21st State Senate District, and the 76th and 77th state House districts.** (*See candidate replies below.*)

The participating young people are actively involved in youth-focused educational and development programs at Peckham and Highfields, and will draw on their lived experiences in the juvenile justice system and the courts to design questions central to their lives. Michigan's Children is assisting in providing the youth with information about the Legislative process, redistricting, and election practices.

The young people are keenly interested in raising issues for discussion including **gun violence, mental health, the impact inflation is having on child care and minimum wage, the impact of Roe v. Wade being overturned, and transparency in government.**

"These amazing young people care deeply about hard issues because they have already, in their short lives, been impacted by these topics," said Peckham's Reentry Services Manager Nate Burmeister, who has been working with the youth to help them prepare for the forum.

"It is no easy thing to bring up politics to both sides of a political race . . . let alone with a microphone! But they are bold enough to get in front of their peers, today's leaders, and anyone who will listen to try and make tomorrow better for everyone."

Many of the young people are enrolled at [Ingham Academy](#), a community-based, day treatment program and alternative high school for adjudicated youth who have been expelled or chronically suspended from their home high schools. It was started in 2007 in collaboration with the Ingham County Circuit Court, Ingham Intermediate School District, Highfields and Peckham Inc.

This forum is presented as a non-partisan activity. It is not a debate. Neither do the event sponsors endorse candidates.

Michigan's Children
215 S. Washington Sq., Ste 135, Lansing, Michigan 48933
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Invited candidates include:

- **7th Congressional District race:** Incumbent **Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin** (D) is schedule to be in Washington, D.C. for a voting session during the forum. However, a campaign spokesperson said Rep. Slotkin will travel home to attend the forum, if the work session is canceled; otherwise a surrogate will attend. **State Sen. Tom Barrett** (R) confirmed he will attend.
- **21st state Senate District race:** **State Rep. Sarah Anthony** (D) confirmed she will attend. Challenger **Nkenge Robertson** (R) has not yet replied to an invitation from Michigan's Children.
- **76th State House race:** Both state **Rep. Angela Witwer** (D) and challenger **Jeremy Whittum** (R) said they will attend.
- **77th State House race:** Both candidates, **Emily Dievendorf** (D) and **John Magoola** (R), said they will attend.

For more information about the event - or to arrange media interviews with forum sponsors and youth - **contact Michigan's Children's Program and Director Teri Banas at Michigan's Children, teri@michiganschildren.org.**



PECKHAM

Peckham, Inc. is a nonprofit community rehabilitation organization that values quality, diversity and performance. Our mission is to provide a wide range of opportunities to maximize human potential for persons striving for independence and self-sufficiency. We embrace collaboration, effective resource management and innovative approaches to achieve world-class excellence.



Highfields, Inc. began in 1962 as a residential camp for troubled boys in Ingham County. Our founders truly believed that with the right opportunities and resources, people can change their lives for the better. Since then, we have taken our organization to new levels. We are now a multi-purpose human services organization which gives about 5,000 people every year the resources they need to turn their lives around. We operate out of five offices to serve 13 counties. Our organization has three branches: residential treatment, in-home counseling programs, and educational services.



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Michigan's Children is the only statewide, multi-issue advocacy organization focused solely on public policy in the best interest of children from cradle to career and their families. We have been creating opportunities for young people and caregivers to share their stories, concerns and suggestions directly with policymakers since 1996. As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, our forums are presented as a non-partisan activity.

<http://www.michiganschildren.org>

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