



Public policy  
in the best interest  
of children

**Contact:** Teri Banas

**Immediate**

**Release**

[teri@michiganschildren.org](mailto:teri@michiganschildren.org)

(517) 896-0241

### **'Parents for Early Childhood' Host Candidate Forum Monday in Traverse City**

*Michigan's Children, Think Babies Michigan, MI-AIMH Sponsor Event Featuring Important Races in the 103<sup>rd</sup>, 104<sup>th</sup> House Districts, and the 37<sup>th</sup> Senate District*

Traverse City – Three advocacy groups focused on improving the lives of Michigan's youngest children and their families will field questions before state Legislative candidates **Monday night (Oct. 17, 2022) in Traverse City.**

The forum features candidates in the pivotal 103<sup>rd</sup> House District race, the 104<sup>th</sup> House District contest and the 37<sup>th</sup> Senate District race. All three races have attracted statewide attention. It takes place at the Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City, MI 49686.

The forum will be livestreamed by Michigan's Children on Facebook Live.

The sponsors, all nonpartisan and not-for-profit organizations, are the [Northwest Chapter of the Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health](#), [Michigan's Children](#), and the [Think Babies Michigan](#) initiative.

There are a number of critical family and community issues on the minds of parent leaders and advocates heading into the forum. Among them are issues that have grabbed the attention of Legislators on both side of the aisle recently, including **child care** and **preschool costs**, and **mental health supports**.

Invited candidates are: Grand Traverse County Commissioner Betsy Coffia (D), State Rep. Jack O'Malley (R) and Libertarian Courtney Evans in **103<sup>rd</sup> House District**; State Rep. John Roth (R) and Cathy Albro (D) in the **104<sup>th</sup> House District**; and Dr. Barbara Conley (D), State Rep. John Damoose (R), and Libertarian Zachary Dean in the **37<sup>th</sup> Senate District**. **Coffia, Roth, Albro, Conley** have confirmed they are attending; **Evans** and **Damoose** have tentatively accepted.

"Young families really need to have the focus placed on them today," **said Dr. Julie Brons**, a forum organizer, and member of the MI-AIMH Northwest Chapter.

**Michigan's Children, 215 S. Washington Sq., Ste 135, Lansing, Michigan 48933 (517) 485-3500**  
[www.michiganschildren.org](http://www.michiganschildren.org)

“This forum is particularly important in lieu of the pandemic and the challenges families have had with accessing care and help for children of all ages, but particularly the younger segment of the population,” she added. “It’s very important to learn what people in government are willing to do to help alleviate that crisis. For families who are very isolated and unable to connect with other people, it makes it a lonely place.”

**Matt Gillard, President & CEO of Michigan’s Children**, said Michigan’s Children is honored to participate in a community-led forum focused on the needs of families of young children, because of the important role they play Michigan’s future.

“Elections are all about voters speaking up, and candidates listening to the voices of constituents to make policy decisions in the best interest of kids and families. This event helps put the power back where it belongs – with the people,” Gillard said.

Contact Teri Banas to arrange interviews with participants and organizers.

###



**The Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health** promotes relationship-focused, culturally responsive, and racially equitable workforce development initiatives, policies, practices and resources. We will strengthen partnerships and equip professionals who work on

behalf of those prenatal to six-years old and families to support social, emotional and relational health in Michigan.



Public policy  
in the best interest  
of children

**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>



**Think Babies Michigan** is a collaborative of thousands of members—leaders, experts, families, organizations and providers—working together to improve the lives of babies prenatally through age 3 in Michigan.