



# Kalamazoo Kids Grill Candidates

By [ANDREW ROBINS \(/PEOPLE/ANDREW-ROBINS/\)](/PEOPLE/ANDREW-ROBINS/) • 17 HOURS AGO

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*2017 file photo of a polling station sign at Western Michigan University*

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Kids in Kalamazoo will get a chance to ask questions of political candidates on Wednesday October 14.

The virtual forum is cosponsored by several state and local groups, including Michigan's Children. Matt Gillard is its president.

"We've had a long history at our organization of finding ways to get young people interacting directly and telling their stories and speaking about the issues they deal with in their lives with policymakers." Gillard says it's important for politicians to hear from young people at events like "Area Youth Lead" even though they can't vote - yet.

"But they obviously have people who care about them a great deal who do vote. And the issues that they're talking about are issues that candidates are talking about, or at least express interest in, in other aspects of their campaign." (P) And Gillard says he expect serious issues to be on the agenda during the forum.

"Children are concerned about access to services, whether it be mental health services or others, and what they're seeing and what the availability of supports are within their schools. What candidates are going to do about underage drug use and other issues that they're seeing in their communities."

He says other issues likely to be raised include juvenile justice reforms and bullying on- and off-line.

The "Area Youth Lead" forum on Google Meet (<https://meet.google.com/gkw-zpow-bog>) starts Wednesday, October 14, at 4 p.m. You can also listen by calling (337) 466-9962 and entering 276930483#. The public can listen to the forum but not ask questions.

Democratic candidates Jon Hoadley (Sixth Congressional District), Julie Rogers (60th State House District), and Christine Morse (61st State House District) have said they will participate. So has Kalamazoo County Commissioner Stephanie Moore, who's a write-in candidate in the 60th State House race. Forum organizers say Republican Sixth District Congressman Fred Upton has also been invited, along with the GOP nominees in the 60th and 61st State House districts: Gary Mitchell and Bronwyn Haltom.

The other sponsors of the forum are the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network, the Michigan Center for Youth Justice, El Concilio Kalamazoo, ASK Family Services, Men of Purpose, Communities in Schools, and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Kalamazoo.

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