



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

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Lansing Regional Chamber Announces Endorsements for Lansing City Council

LANSING, Mich. – Monitoring the pulse of economic development and potential growth in our region is a top priority. As the region’s financial health is critical, a cohesive strategy is imperative to achieve it. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce must respond accordingly when making important decisions on behalf of its members.

Therefore, the Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) announced endorsements for the 2019 Lansing City Council election. The endorsed candidates include Jody Washington (First Ward), Adam Hussain (Third Ward), Patricia Spitzley (At-Large) and Carol Wood (At- Large).

“We have worked together to build bridges and find common ground to address the needs of the city and the business community,” said Steve Japinga, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) vice president of government relations. “These candidates align with the policy priorities identified by our members and residents and will work collaboratively to continue to provide an atmosphere for growth and prosperity in Lansing and throughout the region.”

Among the challenges the city of Lansing continues to face are long-term financial stability, which is being discussed by the city’s Financial Health Team (FHT) and will be evaluated by the city’s new Chief Strategy Officer (CSO). One of the most difficult challenges to overcome is the more than \$600 million in unfunded healthcare and pension liabilities.

“This is a pivotal time for Lansing and its financial health, with legacy costs holding the city back from moving in the positive direction our businesses, residents and lawmakers envision,” said Tim Daman, LRCC president and CEO. “With unfunded liabilities consuming more than a quarter of the city’s budget, it is crucial to Lansing’s future that City Council continues to be a united front of experienced leaders who know the issues and will work to implement real solutions.”

According to a recent survey conducted by the Chamber, 42% of [Lansing voters said](#) the city is heading in the right direction, 29% believe it is heading in the wrong direction and 29% are undecided. A combined 75% of Lansing voters believe that improving the city’s roads and sidewalks should be the number one priority for city officials. Addressing pensions and unfunded liabilities ranked second at 12% and 11% of voters said jobs are a top priority with the rest of the issues garnering less than 10%. Additionally, voters listed neighborhoods (40%) and

public safety (30%) as the second most important priority for city officials. Economic development ranked third at 16%.

The LRC- PAC endorsement process included a review of candidate's experience, responses to a written questionnaire, and in-person interviews. The quality and passion of City Council candidates were inspiring, and the LRC-PAC is encouraged by the growth each candidate has experienced and shown throughout their time in office. Their combined expertise will be necessary in addressing key issues. We look forward to working with these individuals in continuing the economic growth of Lansing and the region.

Jody Washington has served on the Lansing City Council since 2012 and is a lifelong resident of Lansing. Washington has supported economic development, acting as a liaison between business and labor leaders to attract new jobs and investments to Northeast Lansing. Washington was a strong leader in pushing for a CSO to help the city navigate its financial health needs. She is an advocate for residents and neighborhoods and works shoulder-to-shoulder with police officers and neighborhood watch groups to make our streets safer for our children, families and seniors.

Adam Hussain is running for his second term on City Council, having begun his first term in 2016, and is a social studies teacher at Waverly Community Schools. Hussain sees financial health as Lansing's top issue facing the city and supports many recommendations by the FHT. He advocates for small businesses in Southwest Lansing and throughout the region and created the Small Business Façade program to help small businesses move forward and update commercial corridors. Having a passion for improving communities, Hussain is a neighborhood watch coordinator and regularly promotes and joins groups in cleaning up Lansing.

Patricia Spitzley also joined Lansing City Council in 2016. She is a redevelopment manager at Racer Trust and has been working diligently to help improve and grow Lansing through supporting economic development. Additionally, she believes unfunded liabilities and the city's financial health should be a top focus for Council. She supported the CSO and believes this position will help Council identify ways to help the city cut costs and bring relief to residents and businesses. Spitzley also sits on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and supports regional mobility and investment in roads and sidewalks.

Carol Wood has served on City Council for five terms and is also a lifelong resident of Lansing. She has held the office of president or chair on many community-based organizations, in addition to giving countless hours as a member or organizer. She currently sits on the City of Lansing and Charter Township of Lansing Liaison Commission, the Police and Fire Retirement Board and many more. Wood is an advocate for communities, formulating legislation to help neighborhoods become stable and safe. She supported the CSO position and is working with the FHT to help find ways to improve the city's financial health. Wood looks at government through a wide lens and is a supporter of reevaluating city processes to find more efficient ways of operating to save residents and businesses time and money.

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About the LRC-PAC

LRC-PAC is the non-partisan political action committee of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, representing 900 businesses in Lansing and more than 1,000 businesses in the tri-county region. The objective of LRC-PAC is to endorse candidates committed to the principles of free enterprise, economic growth and a pro-business philosophy.

About the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce works relentlessly to help businesses connect, grow and thrive. For more than 115 years, the Chamber has served as the voice of the Greater Lansing business community. We are catalysts for change, uniting business leaders to do collectively what cannot be done alone. More information about the Chamber and its programs and services can be found online at lansingchamber.org, Facebook (@LansingChamber), Instagram (@lansingregionalchamber), Twitter (@LansingChamber), and LinkedIn.