



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Oct. 20, 2009

Contact: Patricia Kemp
(313) 872-2202 ext. 209
(313) 220-3335 (cell)
pkemp@bergmuirhead.com

Saunteel Jenkins announces youth violence reduction platform

*Jenkins and four other Council candidates sign pledge to make prevention of youth violence
a priority if they are elected*

DETROIT—Saunteel Jenkins, a social worker and candidate for Detroit City Council, said today youth violence has reached an “epidemic level” in Detroit and announced plans to convene a prevention planning task force to reduce youth violence if elected on Nov. 3.

The task force would pull together school and faith-based to work with police and law enforcement, the business and labor community, non-profit groups and elected officials to develop a comprehensive program to reduce youth violence.

Four other Council candidates joined Jenkins in signing a pledge to make the reduction of youth violence a priority if they are elected. Joining Jenkins in signing the pledge were Gary Brown, Charles Pugh, Andre Spivey and James Tate.

“One of my first priorities if elected as a member of the Detroit City Council will be to implement a comprehensive set of programs to reduce youth violence in Detroit,” said Jenkins. “We owe each child a safe, nurturing environment, but sadly as a community, we are falling short of that obligation.”

Jenkins’ task force would take steps to:

- launch more street-outreach and afterschool programs
- create internship and apprenticeship opportunities for youth
- invest in police initiatives to target violent gangs, and
- implement gun buy-back programs to reduce the number of guns on the streets.

“Violence by youth and targeting youth has become so commonplace. It is accepted as a fact of life,” she said.

-more-

Paid for by Saunteel Jenkins for Detroit City Council

Jenkins' 14-year-old brother, JoVan, was killed by gun violence in 1991 over a jacket. She said 18 years later, the pain of the loss has not gone away for her family.

“Tragically, hundreds of other Detroit families have been ripped apart by senseless violence,” said Jenkins. “Youth violence is at an epidemic level in our community.”

Jenkins said for each dollar spent on afterschool programs, approximately three dollars are spent on the Wayne County Juvenile Facility.

“We have to spend the dollars up front to reduce the likelihood of incarceration on the back end,” she said.

Task force members invited to participate would include the City of Detroit, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit Federation of Teachers, as well as other labor unions, the business community, faith-based groups, non-profits, the Detroit Police Department, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office and community groups who are focused on youth.

Jenkins has worked at the street level as a social worker helping troubled youth and adults turn around their lives. As chief of staff for the late Council President Maryann Mahaffey, Jenkins worked to implement fair public policy for social programs.

Jenkins is currently the residential treatment director at Mariners Inn, a residential substance abuse treatment center in the Cass Corridor for men who are homeless and addicted to drugs or alcohol.

###