

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

Whitmer Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov 20, 2009

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Meadows, Whitmer Protest Closing of Sec. of State Branch Office *Eliminating East Lansing office will hurt student voting, participation*

EAST LANSING – Joined by East Lansing officials and Michigan State University students, State Representative **Mark Meadows** (D-East Lansing) and State Senator **Gretchen Whitmer** (D-East Lansing) today voiced their opposition to the Secretary of State's announcement that the East Lansing and Lansing offices would be eliminated to create a new branch office in the city of Lansing, a move that will make it much more difficult for students to register to vote, become involved in the electoral process and have access to vital services.

"Whether folks are renewing a driver's license, obtaining vehicle plates or registering to vote, these branches are essential for connecting citizens and government and by closing these offices, we are effectively limiting access to government," said Whitmer, who earned her law degree from Michigan State University. "The current East Lansing branch is the only option for many Michigan State University students who don't have a mode of transportation. Forcing citizens to travel long distances to obtain basic services only creates more unnecessary roadblocks."

The Secretary of State recently announced that she plans to close the East Lansing and downtown Lansing branch offices to create a new Capital Area SUPER!Center at a yet-to-be-determined location within Lansing. The closures will result in a meager savings of just \$2,200, more than offset by the inconvenience to students and other community members.

If the proposed closings go through, East Lansing residents will be forced to travel to the Eaton County or Mason Secretary of State branches until the location of the Capital Area SUPER!Center in the city of Lansing is determined. Many MSU students lack the ability to reliably get to these offices, as many do not drive and freshmen are prohibited from having cars on campus. The accessible location on Albert provides MSU's 40,000 students a way to easily register to vote and take advantage of other Secretary of State services.

"The Secretary of State's plan will put a giant wall between our students and their ability to participate in our democracy," said Meadows, who served as Mayor of East Lansing prior to joining the State House. "We shouldn't be forcing our kids to jump through hoops just so the state can save \$6 a day. This poorly thought out decision is bad for

our students, bad for our residents and bad for East Lansing."

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