

# MICHIGAN SAFETY & JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE

## SPEAKER BIOS

THE WESTIN BOOK CADILLAC DETROIT  
1114 WASHINGTON BLVD, DETROIT, MI 48226  
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Dr. **Amanda Alexander** is the founding Executive Director of the Detroit Justice Center (DJC), a non-profit law firm working alongside communities to create economic opportunities, transform the justice system, and promote equitable and just cities. Originally from Michigan, Dr. Alexander has worked at the intersection of racial justice and community development in Detroit, New York, and South Africa for over 15 years. As a 2013-2015 Soros Justice Fellow, she launched the Prison & Family Justice Project at University of Michigan

Law School to provide legal representation to incarcerated parents and advocate for families divided by the prison and foster care systems. In 2017, Dr. Alexander received an Echoing Green Fellowship to accelerate DJC's launch.

Dr. Alexander is a Senior Research Scholar in Law at the University of Michigan, where she drove a successful effort to establish an Inside-Out Prison Exchange program at UM-Ann Arbor and local prisons. She regularly assists and trains community organizations, advocates, and government agencies working to promote successful re-entry, alternatives to incarceration, and economic justice.

Dr. Alexander received her JD from Yale Law School, her PhD in History from Columbia University, and her BA from Harvard College. She is an adviser to the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated and serves on the board of the Center for Constitutional Rights and the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership.





**Melanca Clark** is president and CEO of Hudson-Webber Foundation, a private foundation dedicated to improving quality of life in Detroit. The foundation's core mission areas are community and economic development, safe and just communities, the built environment and arts and culture.

Prior to joining the Foundation in August 2016, Melanca held several senior positions in the Obama Administration including Chief of Staff of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at the U.S.

Department of Justice (DOJ), Senior Policy Advisor with the White House Domestic Policy Council, and Senior Counsel with DOJ's Access to Justice Initiative.

Prior to her government service, Melanca served as Counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, a John J. Gibbons Fellow in Public Interest and Constitutional Law at the Gibbons law firm, and a Skadden Fellow and Assistant Counsel with the Economic Justice Group of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. She also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr., U.S. District Court of New Jersey; adjunct professor at Seton Hall University School of Law, and a litigation associate with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison.

Melanca earned her law degree from Harvard Law School and her undergraduate degree from Brown University.



**Mark Holden** serves as senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary of Koch Industries, Inc. He is also president and COO of the Legal Division of Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC, which provides legal, government and public affairs services to Koch Industries, Inc. and its affiliates. In addition, he also serves as Chairman of the Board of Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, Inc. and serves on the Board of Directors of Americans For Prosperity. Mr. Holden began his career with Koch Industries in 1995 as a litigation attorney and was vice president and general counsel for litigation and compliance.

Mr. Holden earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Massachusetts. He earned his law degree from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America, where he was an associate editor of the Catholic University Law Review. Mr. Holden is a leading voice for criminal justice reform, having witnessed the devastating results of overcriminalization on the lives of others throughout his life, and is building bridges between traditional political opponents on both left and right to advance smart and effective criminal justice policies.





**Gilda Z. Jacobs** has served as president & CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy since 2011, following a 30-year career in public service at the local, county and state levels. Gilda has won numerous awards for her work, including being named as one of the 100 Most Influential Women in Michigan by Crain's Detroit Business in 2016 and receiving the Michigan Food Bank Council's Hunger-Free Award in 2015. She served in the state Senate for eight years after serving two terms in the Michigan House of Representatives where she made

history as the first woman floor leader in either chamber of the Legislature. In addition to her civic leadership, Jacobs served as Development Director for JARC, a Jewish association providing residential care for persons with developmental disabilities. She also worked as a special education teacher in the Madison School District. Jacobs received both her bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Michigan.

**Sheryl Kubiak**, Ph.D. currently serves as dean and professor of the Wayne State University School of Social Work. Kubiak is also the director of the school's new Center for Behavioral Health and Justice, which houses her grant-funded research and



provides local communities, organizations, and behavioral health and law enforcement agencies with an array of expert support examining the intersection of criminal/legal systems and behavioral health. Prior to her current position, Kubiak was a professor in the College of Social Science's Department of Social Work at Michigan State University. Kubiak was also a research associate in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Substance Abuse Research Center – both at University of Michigan, where she received her M.S.W. and

Ph.D. in Psychology. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work with a minor in business administration from Madonna University. Kubiak's research primarily focuses on the use of diversion programs and integration of substance abuse and mental health treatment into the criminal justice system. Since her first foray into this arena 30 years ago, she has received funding from national and state agencies as well as private foundations to research and evaluate projects.





**Kahryn A. Riley** manages the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's criminal justice reform initiative. A Michigan native, she studied in the honors programs at Hillsdale College and Regent University School of Law. She holds a BA in politics and a JD, and is admitted to the Michigan State Bar.

Riley launched the Center's criminal justice reform initiative in 2016, and publishes regularly on issues pertaining to the state penal code, law enforcement, the corrections system and other matters of public safety and civil rights. Her work has appeared in publications including the Detroit News, the Lansing State Journal, The Hill and USA Today, and she is a sought-after speaker for criminal justice reform events and legislative briefings hosted by advocacy organizations from across the political spectrum. Her forthcoming primer on the state criminal justice system is a unique resource that provides a comprehensive overview of how Michigan addresses crime and public safety.

Riley is also a Visiting Fellow in criminal justice policy at the Badger Institute in Wisconsin, where she supports the Institute's corrections reform effort. She has previously worked for the Foundation for Economic Education in Irvington, New York, FreedomWorks in Washington DC and the Office of the Public Defender in Norfolk, VA.

