**Name: Kenyatta Nicole Vaughn**

**District running for: 6th**

**Political party: Democrat**

**Political/civic background:**

**Occupation: Unemployed**

**Education:** bachelor’s in Sociology, DePaul University

Master’s in Human Resource Management, Keller Graduate School

**Campaign website:** www.vaughnforstaterep.com

**Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses**

**Taxes/Budget:**

Q. *Illinois has a massive state debt and crushing pension debt. Many elected officials from the governor to state lawmakers have indicated there is a need for additional revenue to help balance the budget.  If Illinois needs to generate additional revenue, which options would you support in a budget package:*

*1.     Increase the state’s income tax on individuals or corporations, either temporarily or permanently.*

*2.     Expand the sales tax to services.*

*3.     Tax retirement income in excess of $50,000.*

*4.     Adopt a progressive income tax. I would support/adopt a progressive income tax*

*If you oppose all tax hikes, please provide specifics on how you would reduce state spending by $7 billion to balance the state budget.*

A)N/A

Q) *Do you support another legislative attempt at pension reform? If so, which proposed changes in the pension system would you support that you believe would pass constitutional muster?*

A) I would be in favor of a two tier system:

1. Those individuals that are currently retired will keep their benefits

2. Those individuals who are employed after 2017 will come into a system that will all

Allow a reduce benefit. For example, propose to raise retirement age to 68 years of age. They may have to pay a portion of their health insurance cost such as paying more for family cost(spouse)

Q) *Do you support a budget template developed by a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators that would allow members to pass a budget without the consent of the legislative leaders?*

A) Yes

**Education:**

Q) *What, if anything, should we do to change how we fund schools?*

A) Move away from property tax as a major source of funding

Q) *Do you favor the state picking up the pension costs for Chicago teachers, as the state does for teachers outside Chicago? Do you favor school districts outside Chicago picking up their own pension costs, as Chicago does now?*

A) I’m in favor of the state picking up cost. No, the state should pick up cost even for school districts outside of Chicago.

Q) *State support for public higher education has declined for two decades. Do you favor the status quo or a significant increase in state funding? What is your plan to restore Illinois’ leadership in public higher education?*

A) I favor a significant increase in state funding. In efforts to restore Illinois’ leadership, I would implement a plan to increase the level of investment in higher education.

**Transportation**:

Q) *Illinois has a tremendous backlog of infrastructure needs: roads, bridges, waterways, transit. What would be a good way to pay for it? Do you support an increased gas tax — and/or other taxes and fees — to finance infrastructure improvements, including public transit?*

A) A good way to pay for it would be by applying taxes on cars and other vehicles that would be using these named modes of transportation. Yes, I would support a increase in gas tax.

Q) *Illinois’ public transportation formula provides money for operating costs, but not capital costs. Should Illinois create a reliable funding stream for capital costs? Yes*

**Jobs:**

Q)  *Illinois has long been a strong manufacturing state. Today, Illinois employs fewer than 600,000 manufacturing workers and manufacturing’s share of the Gross State Product has dropped to 12.4 percent.  Our state saw the loss of nearly 10,000 manufacturing jobs in 2015 and announcements from some high-profile companies of job losses. The average manufacturing job pays more than $70,000 and helps create a strong middle class.  Name the top three things that you would do to help attract and retain manufacturing jobs in Illinois.*

A) 1. Increase the investment in STEM education

2. Increase the investment in higher education

3. Provide more resources for preschool education, family education, and community development

**Energy:**

Q)  *Illinois has a very diverse energy portfolio and is a net exporter of energy in a deregulated marketplace. Energy is poised to be major issue in 2016 because of federal regulations and possible changes in Illinois’ energy portfolio. Nuclear energy emits zero carbon emissions at a time when the new federal rule requires Illinois to reduce carbon emissions by 44 percent. Do you support or oppose legislation backed by Exelon to create a low-carbon portfolio standard?*

A) Yes

Q)  *Illinois’ current Renewable Portfolio Standard calls for Illinois to procure a certain percentage of renewable power by the year 2020.  The state is only halfway to its goal, and there is a proposal to increase the required amount of renewable energy and extending the time period to meet that goal. Do you support or oppose increasing Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard even if the cost of power increases slightly? Do you support or oppose the Illinois Clean Jobs bill?*

A) Yes, I support clean jobs bill even if the cost slightly increases because in the long run it will be better for Illinois economy and environment.

Q)  *Illinois has to reduce carbon emissions by 44 percent under the federal rule.  Do you support creation of either a cap-and-trade program or a carbon tax to help mitigate carbon emissions in Illinois?*

A) Yes

**Gun safety:**

Q) *Do you support tighter gun background check laws? Do you support limiting straw gun purchases?*

A) Yes

Q) *Do you support or oppose state licensing for all firearms dealers?*

A) I support state licensing for all firearms dealers.

Q) *Do you support or oppose allowing families to petition the courts to temporarily remove guns from people in crisis?*

A) Yes

**Criminal justice:**

Q) *Do you support or oppose legislation to promote the transparency and preservation of police disciplinary records?*

A) Yes, I support legislation to promote the transparency and preservation of police disciplinary records.

Q)  *Do you support the goal of reducing the Illinois adult prison population by 25% by 2025? Would you support sentencing reform such as reducing or eliminating prison terms for non-violent drug offenses? Would you support early release of aged and disabled prisoners predicated on an assessment of risk to public safety prior to release?*

A) Yes

Q) *Do you support automatic expungement and sealing of criminal records for all crimes after an appropriate period during which the former offender commits no crimes?*

A) Yes

Q) *Given that there are more empty beds than youth now in the juvenile prisons, do you support closing one or more juvenile prisons?*

A) Yes

Q) *What is your view on a proposal to end the placement of juveniles on the state’s sex offender registry based on assessment of their risk and likelihood to reoffend and/or benefit from treatment? For adult sex offenders, what is your view on delivery of rehabilitation therapy and limiting sex offender registry restrictions only to those men and women assessed to pose a danger to others?*

A) I believe there should be a system in place to track/monitor the offender for a period of time. Juveniles should be protected from the general population but their crimes should be made known to entities such as the police department, school system etc. I believe that adult sex offenders should remain know and be removed over a period of time by way of regularly reassessments to determine existing risk factors. There should be annual mandatory assessments of adult offenders.

Q) *Do you support a form of merit selection of judges?*

A) Yes

**Other:**

Q) *Do you support the pending constitutional amendment to create an independent commission to draw legislative districts?*

A) No

Q) *What changes in workers’ compensation or tort reform do you favor?*

A) I support creating caps on workers compensation after a serious study of all relevant issues.

Q) *Do you support or oppose automatic voter registration?*

A) I support automatic voter registration.

Q) *What sort of ethics and campaign-funding reforms does the state need?*

A) There should be limitations on businesses that’s doing business with the state. Those businesses should be limited to making contributions to state and local elected official

Q) *2016 is going to be a big year in education, as both state and the City of Chicago wrestle with fundamental issues of funding and school policy. Who was the most important teacher in your life and why?*

A) My fourth grade teacher Ms. Barlow. She introduced my class to African American Literature and it taught me a lot about my rich culture.