**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: **Joseph C. Ziegler, Jr.**

Ward: **21st Ward**

Occupation: **Business Owner (Entrepreneur)**

Education: **Keller Graduate School, Chicago, Illinois**

 **Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

 **Chicago Vocational High School**

Previous political and civic experience:

**I have been Executive Director of an organization call CAN (Community Action Network). Through our organization we have: feed hungry families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, painted homes for seniors in our community (free of charge), donated baseballs to our little league teams, held candidate forums to familiarize residents with those individuals who seek elective office held back to school gospel programs in conjunction with neighborhood churches and distributed school supplies. I have never stopped working in our community!**

**1) City Pensions**

Chicago's fire and police pensions are greatly underfunded, and the city is required by the state to make a $550 million payment into the pension funds by the end of 2015. Do you support restructuring the pension systems, inevitably reducing benefits, to put the funds on sound financial footing?

Yes or No:

Please Explain:

 **My mother is a former public employee and member of AFSCME union. She retired in 2006. I fully understand the financial devastation that pension shortfalls cause and the amendment of benefits to those how worked diligently for the city to earned those benefits**

Chicago's pension systems for municipal workers and laborers already has been restructured, reducing benefits, but the city has yet to identify where it will find the revenue to sufficiently fund those systems. Under what circumstances would you support a property tax increase to raise the needed revenue for the fire and police pensions and/or the municipal workers and laborers pensions?

**Currently I am not in support of a tax increase on the residents of the city of Chicago. I cannot discuss whether or not the borrowing was justified; however, I have several ideas going forward to bridge the pension gap. 1. Red Light Cameras: revenue from these cameras go into the general fund with no oversight I would support earmarking some of this revenue to other budget reducing line items. 2. There is $1.7 billion in TIFF money that is ported from one ward to another. Many of these TIFF dollars are used to fund private ventures. There should be an analyzation of this pool of funds and a redistribution of the fund pool. 3. There has been some discussion of a Tobin Tax or Commuter Tax. I would be open to further discussing this option. *Lastly*, 4. An Exchange Tax; this is a tax on trades made on the Board of Options. This will increase the revenue of the City of Chicago without placing additional financial burdens on the citizens who live and work and pay taxes in the city.**

**2) Chicago Public Schools pensions**

Large and growing payments required to keep the Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund solvent are squeezing CPS' budget, forcing cuts elsewhere and limiting investment. The Chicago Board of Education has increased property taxes, but it is not enough to keep up with the high annual costs. What measures do you support to ensure a solvent retirement system and to improve the district's finances?

**I would like to propose an ordinance that would require the city to fund the pensions of all public workers as a part of a balance budget agreement.**

**My mother is a former public employee and member of AFSCME union. She retired in 2006. I fully understand the financial devastation that pension shortfalls cause and the amendment of benefits to those how worked diligently for the city to earned those benefits**

**3) Revenue**

In light of the financial issues discussed above, do you support any or all of the following measures, each of which would require**,** at a minimum, approval by the Illinois Legislature?

\* A statewide expansion of the sales tax base to include more consumer services

Yes or No:

\* A tax on non-Chicago residents who work in the city

Yes or No: **Under consideration.**

\* A tax on electronic financial transactions on Chicago’s trading exchanges, known as the “LaSalle Street tax”

Yes or No: **Under consideration.**

Please explain your views, if you wish, on any of these three revenue-generating measures.

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**4) Crime**

Do you support hiring more police officers to combat crime and gun violence in Chicago?

Yes or No:

Please explain:

The Chicago Police Department is undermanned. There is a need to increase our police force. I am in favor of an ordinance that would tie that manning of the department to the requests for service. Areas that receive the most requests will receive more officers.

What legislation in Springfield would you support to try to stem the flow of illegal guns into Chicago?

**Gun control-a gun by itself is worthless with ammunition. Technology now allow for the bar coding and tracking of bullet purchases. I would be in favor of tighter constraints on ammunition.**

**5) Elected school board**

An advisory referendum on switching Chicago to an elected school board, rather than an appointed board, is expected to be on the ballot in more than 30 wards on Feb. 24. Currently, the mayor appoints all seven board membersand the Schools CEO. Do you support a change to an elected school board?

Yes or No:

**I will work with CTU to secure an elected school board. I understand that the elected school board will bring a new level accountability to the system.**

**6) Tax-increment financing districts**

TIFs are the primary economic development tool of the city. In a TIF district, taxes from the growth in property values are set aside for 23 years to be used for public projects and private development. Do you support increasing the annual TIF surplus that the mayor and the City Council have declared in each of the last few years, money that goes to the schools and other city agencies?

Yes or No:

What reforms would you propose for the city's TIF program?

**I would propose changes in TIF financing. Some TIF projects fund private ventures. Public funds should be used for the long-term benefit of the community. I would propose a one-time withdrawal from the TIF pool to fund the pensions of city workers.**

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

What would you do as alderman to boost economic development in your ward, and bring jobs to your community?

**As the Alderman of the 21st Ward I will develop an employment database. Residents can register with my office and employers within the ward can use the Alderman’s office as a resource for potential employees. This becomes a “win win” for the community. Residents who live in the ward can work in the ward.**

**8) Size of the Chicago City Council**

The City Council has 50 members, but civic groups and other regularly argue for reducing the size of the Council. What should the size of the Council be? Please provide a specific number. And why?

**Yes! Four years ago, I proposed reducing the city council by 20 aldermen. The maps were being redrawn as a result of the census. Most thought that was a laughable proposition until Mayor Emanuel suggestion it after he was elected**

**9) A Chicago casino**

Do you support, in general concept, establishing a gambling casino in Chicago?

Yes or No: **Under Advisement.**

Please explain:

**I have proposed other methods of raising revenue without the establishment of a gambling casino. I would be willing to further review this option.**

**10) Red light and speed cameras.**

Does the city have an acceptable number of red light and speed cameras currently, and are they properly employed?

Yes or No:

Please explain:

**My ward in inundated with red light and speed cameras. I am not a proponent of this program. It has been documented that these cameras do not increase safety but increase the revenue of the city.**

**11) Ward issues**

What are the top three issues in your ward — the ones you talk about most on the campaign trail?

**I will work to increase city services to the residents of the ward. Our ward has undergone economic growth at the expense of city services. Streets have pot holes, trees need trimming, deteriorating sidewalks and crumbling curbs all are in need repair.**