**Name:** Dan McConchie

**District running for:** State Senate – 26th District

**Political party:** Republican

**Political/civic background:**

* Never previously run for public office
* Member, Board of Directors of Informed Choices Pregnancy & Parenting in Grayslake/Crystal Lake, IL
* Member, Board of Regents for The Fund for American Studies in Washington, DC
* Member, Public Works Committee of Village of Hawthorn Woods, IL

**Occupation:** Vice President of Government Affairs, Americans United for Life

**Education:** MA in Christian Thought – Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL; BA in Bible – Central Bible College, Springfield, MO

**Campaign website:** Dan4Illinois.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.*

*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) In 2011 when Democrats levied the highest tax increase in state history. We were told this increase would be used to secure our financial situation. In two years, the state took in $31 billion in additional revenue. However our number of unpaid bills remain stubbornly high, our unfunded pension liability grew, our credit rating was downgraded and we added $127 million to our debt.

What this means is that our primary problem is not revenue, but is structural.

We need higher education reform – we spend twice as much per student in our state universities than surrounding states, yet our tuition is still higher. Universities need a freer hand to lower costs for the state and the students.

Our procurement process is extremely complex resulting in at least $1 billion in extra procurement costs. We need increased competition and increased transparency in all state purchasing.

Without pension reform, the retirements of our state workers and the futures of our taxpayers are in jeopardy. Currently, one-quarter of every dollar the state takes in goes to fund pensions, yet our unfunded liability continues to grow.

Without worker compensation reform and tort reform, Illinois remains an unattractive place for businesses to locate and to grow. Currently, the state has the highest unemployment rate in the Midwest. Since our last major income tax hike, we’ve added more people to food stamp rolls than to employment rolls.

Our fiscal issues are moral issues. It is wrong for us to further increase our debts and obligations and pass those onto the next generation. It is abuse to continue to increase spending and raise taxes to benefit the well-connected at the expense of families. We must reform our failing systems and put Illinois on a path to economic growth that will lead to improved quality of life for our families, better opportunities for job seekers, and higher tax revenues for state and local governments. Otherwise, those who are able will move out of state and leave those who cannot behind to shoulder the bill.

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) The state has a $111 billion (and growing) unfunded pension liability. Illinois simply cannot tax, borrow, or invest our way out of a debt this big. I do support another attempt at pension reform because Illinois has:

* the largest unfunded pension liability in the nation
* the worst credit rating in the nation
* the highest unemployment in the Midwest

About 25% of the state budget is spent on pension payments while most states only spend 5%. And, even before the budget impasse, our ability to deliver services had greatly deteriorated. If left unreformed, our severely underfunded pension system will continue to grow and completely swallow the state budget.

Courts have ruled over the years that important state interests can justify limiting constitutional rights. In fact, the Illinois Supreme Court acknowledged the principle in a 1985 case involving a change in the computation of judicial pensions that left some judges with lower benefits. The constitution “does not immunize contractual obligations from every conceivable kind of impairment or from the effect of a reasonable exercise by the states of their police power,” the court said in *Felt v. Board of Trustees*. A similar line of analysis in the pension case must lead justices to consider the fact that the reforms serve an important state interest.

The state needs to test the constitutionality of moving all current public employees into self-managed plans for future work, while protecting already-earned benefits. This approach is more likely to pass constitutional review, because it focuses on changing future benefits that have yet to be earned.

I support reforms that transition government employees away from defined benefits and toward 401(k)-style plans, such as those in the private sector. This is critical to improving the finances of the state and to move control of retirement funds away from the politicians and allow retirees to control their own money.

I also support pension reform bill HR 752 (from 2015) which lowers costs by providing a lump sum buyout of current and future annuitants potentially saving the state billions long-term.

The pension issue is an issue of fairness. Is it fair for working families making an average of $50,000 per year to finance lifetime benefits for government workers? Is it fair to perpetuate a state pension system where pension checks could bounce and pensioners could be left with nothing? State workers deserve the security and control of owning their own retirement accounts and shouldn’t have to pay into a system that may collapse and leave them with no money when they retire.

We need to pay workers what they’ve earned, including promised pensions, and let them control their futures. Unless major changes to the public pensions in Illinois occur in the near future, government employee pensions are destined to go the way of those in Detroit.

*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) I would go beyond this. I support a change to legislative rules to allow any bill, including the budget, to be subject to a discharge petition where a bill is “discharged” from committee and sent directly to the House or Senate floor for debate upon the signature of a majority of members of the chamber.

Currently, each state legislative chamber is tightly controlled by their leader. Unfortunately, virtually no piece of legislation introduced in either the House or the Senate can ever be enacted into law without the Leader’s consent. One way to break this stranglehold is to empower a majority of legislators to act on their own when leadership blocks legislation that has majority support from advancing.

**Education:**

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

A)No child should be subject to a failing education simply based upon their zip code.

The current system that is funded by property taxes and the nebulous General State Aid formula leaves many kids in failing schools with no real options.

I believe that school funding should be attached to the student allowing parents to choose the school best for their child, whether it be public school, charter school or private school.

Any reforms in the funding formula short of this must accompany fundamental reforms that ensure a proper education for all.

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) We should never allow one unit of government the ability to hand an obligation to another unit without any responsibility for those costs. That practice destroys spending accountability and has put the entire system at risk.

Increasing local pension accountability would increase each school district’s total costs by an average of 3.7 percent. But more than half of Illinois school districts could offset these costs by ending the local school district practice of paying, as a benefit, the teachers’ required contribution to pensions. Based on data self-reported by school districts directly to the Illinois School Board of Education, or ISBE, currently almost two-thirds of school districts in the state pay some or all of their teachers’ required contribution.

Further, increasing local pension accountability would force communities to elect school board members who are fiscally restrained. While this may be difficult, the end results will be far more sustainable than the current system.

Teachers might even discover that when they adapt to a pension structure that they pay into equitably, and that gives them investment flexibility toward building a retirement nest egg, more leeway on salary increases, not less, will emerge in contract negotiations in their prime earning years.

Further, states as broke as Illinois need to get out of the business of subsidizing public school teachers’ pension and retirement health care benefits. It endangers the state’s solvency and the security of retirees’ pension funds.

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) Right now, tuition is 30 to 60 percent higher for our public universities when compared similar universities in neighboring states. And it’s not because we’re not adequately funding our schools. The State of Illinois spends over $12,000 per full time equivalent student, while the national average is around $6,500.

The problem are the burdens the schools are under because of rules passed on by the state make the cost of doing business in Illinois so high - purchasing requirements, unfunded mandates, prevailing wage requirements, collective bargaining and workers compensation all drive up the cost of education.

Our schools are critical to our state’s future. With tuition so high, many students go to schools out of state never to return. This breaks up families and causes future taxpayers to put down roots elsewhere meaning our future economic engine is threatened.

Since 2009, the system has suffered the steepest enrollment plunge (17.8 percent) by a wide margin among the 50 states, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. Now, hundreds of lightly attended programs are under scrutiny by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, foreshadowing a potential rethink of the state's higher-ed network, a $7 billion industry employing 52,840 and conferring nearly 40,000 bachelor's degrees annually.

State universities also are hostage to the state's credit rating and its threat of higher borrowing costs, which is the result of the mismanagement of state finances under Illinois Democrats.

In order to restore Illinois’ leadership in public higher education, we must restore our state to fiscal solvency and efficiency. This requires making politically difficult decisions about the state’s current structure and how it can be reformed.

**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) The first priority of government is to provide for public safety and to maintain infrastructure. Because maintaining infrastructure is a top priority, I suggest the state prioritizes its spending needs and cut unnecessary items to fund our roads, bridges, waterways and transit such as a $35 million grant that went to a school in Speaker Madigan’s district outside normal grant lines; the $500,000 in General Revenue funds to Gateway Motorsports Park; the $10 million in capital construction money that went to a theater in Senate President Cullerton’s district; the $250,000 in General Revenue Funds that will go to fund a year-long celebration of the state’s birthday; and the nearly $700,000 that went to putting bronze doors on the Capitol building.

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

The most important consideration in creating a reliable funding stream for capital costs is how it will be funded. After over a decade of one-party rule, the state is insolvent – creating a new funding stream at this point would add to our budgetary challenges.

The state should require that departments prioritize their spending and save accordingly. Budget procedures make clear that projects with dedicated funding in agencies’ proposed budgets are far more likely to have requisite capital projects money. Moreover, once a project is approved, a department can earmark and carry forward the funds needed to see that project to completion. Because of these features, money would drive the long-term capital budget and not the other way around.

**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) Most of these losses resulted from the Great Recession – a colossal 117,000 manufacturing jobs were shed from January 2008-January 2010 – but precious few have returned.

In the four and a half years of recovery since then, Illinois has only regained 18,000 manufacturing jobs. Nearly 100,000 manufacturing jobs were never recovered. Illinois has recovered a smaller portion of manufacturing jobs than all of its neighbor states and all the Great Lakes states.

Three business policy issues relate directly to a state’s ability to attract good manufacturing jobs: workers’ compensation reform, the ability of employees to work without forced union participation and a lower business tax burden.

Illinois is the worst in the region on both policy issues, while Michigan and Indiana are the best. Unsurprisingly, Illinois’ manufacturing recovery has been worst, while Michigan and Indiana’s have been best.

The lesson is clear: make your state attractive and manufacturers will locate there. Illinois manufacturers are constantly lured into bordering states, [especially Indiana](http://www.illinoispolicy.org/hoosier-playbook-how-indiana-lures-illinoisans-with-opportunity/). Policy drives these decisions.

**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) I support all forms of energy creation.

One of the best ways to encourage growth in Illinois is through our energy industry. We are blessed with abundant coal and natural gas resources. With regulations that are reasonable and based on common-sense, we can grow our state’s competitive advantage, create middle class jobs and begin to re-fuel our economy.

The American economy was built, and American lifestyles depend, upon relatively inexpensive, abundant, reliable sources of energy. According to H. Sterling Burnett, a senior fellow with the National Center for Policy Analysis, economic growthdependsupon increased energy use. Economists estimate that over the next 20 years, U.S. oil consumption will grow by one-third and electricity demand could increase by more than 45 percent. Economist Steven Moore has noted that the growth of our GDP was around 2% this past year, almost all of that growth is attributable to the energy sector – despite significant federal restrictions.

Herein lies a tremendous opportunity for Illinois. We are a state rich in coal and natural gas found in shale deposits. Fossil fuels, oil, and natural gas alone are critical for transportation and increasingly for electricity, but they also serve as feedstock for plastics, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, lubricants and construction materials.

High prices of energy, both in the present and historical sense, have persisted and are arguably contributing to the recent extended economic decline. Thus, converging lines of evidence suggest that access to abundant, reliable, relatively inexpensive fuels will be critical to reestablishing and maintaining long-term economic growth in Illinois.

Fortunately, the steps necessary to bring forth increased energy security and independence would be good for the economy, for the general public and for state coffers.

We should immediately halting a variety of enacted and proposed regulations and taxes that would restrict energy choices and raise energy prices. Instead we should build upon good energy policy, such as the fracking bill that was signed into law in 2013.

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) The state's “renewable portfolio standard” mandates the gradual consumption statewide of more renewable energy, with a requirement that 25 percent of the state's power demand be met by clean sources by 2025. But the Illinois Power Agency (IPA), which negotiates electricity purchases on behalf of utility customers statewide, has been unable in recent years to contract for new renewable power purchases because of the way the act was written.

Essentially, as utilities like Commonwealth Edison have seen most of their customers migrate to alternative energy suppliers, the IPA has had to buy less and less on behalf of utilities' remaining customers. The IPA's shrinking buying power, along with other glitches in the law, has [crippled its ability to negotiate long-term contracts](http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20120714/ISSUE01/307149976/how-comed-defections-are-killing-green-power-in-illinois) with new renewable generators.

A [comprehensive bill](http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20131024/NEWS11/131029881/exelon-enviros-agree-on-law-change-to-spur-green-energy) would have required nonutility suppliers to households and small businesses to pay more into an IPA-managed fund and establish a reliable revenue source to contract with developers of new renewable projects, mainly solar.

Right now, the state’s families and businesses are hurting as a result of bad public policy advanced by Illinois Democrats.

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) The conventional wisdom is that carbon taxes are a political dead end. Cap-and-trade advocates also snicker at the idea that the IRS, with its 16,000 page tax code, could ever craft a “simple” tax on carbon or anything else. But, I believe that environmentalists can make common cause with deficit hawks.

That is, what if a carbon tax were coupled with tax cuts elsewhere, such as on wages? That’s precisely what Rep. Bob Ingliss, a South Carolina Republican, [has proposed](http://inglis.house.gov/sections/issues/current/rnct/The%20Triple%20Win%20%282%29.pdf). A straight carbon tax is meant to discourage use of dirty energy and drive investment in alternative energy.

Shifting the tax burden away from labor and toward consumption—which a carbon tax would undoubtedly do—might just have another benefit: it could prod Americans to save more. And saving more could be one of the keys to tackling America’s twin deficits—trade and the budget—which loom as one of the biggest economic and strategic challenges facing the country.

**Gun safety:**

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

A) The state of Illinois already imposes some of the strictest gun-control laws in the nation. I believe that law-abiding citizens have the right to arm themselves if they so choose.

Straw purchasing is already a federal crime that can land someone in jail for up to 10 years and a $250,000 fine. Under Illinois law, it is a Class 2 felony.

The problem here is a lack of enforcement, not that laws on the books don’t exist.

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

A) There is already a licensing procedure in place at the federal level through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. State licensing would add another budget item to our already unbalanced budget and create more hurdles and additional costs for business owners and law-abiding citizens.

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

A) It is important that responsible steps are taken to prevent those who are mentally ill or in crisis from accessing deadly weapons. My concern is the effectiveness of Extreme Risk Protection Orders. The process requires family members and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily suspend someone’s access to firearms based on documented, sworn evidence that they pose a threat to themselves or others. Petitions would be reviewed by a judge, and individuals who knowingly file false petitions can be charged with a crime. In a true emergency, the process may prove ineffective. I would need to weigh the costs of implementing such a program against the perceived benefits.

**Criminal justice:**

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

A) A great deal of attention has been given to police relations in the state – specifically in the City of Chicago. I believe we need to take responsible steps in regards to transparency and preservation to prevent future incidences of corruption and cover-up from occurring. That begins with change from the top-down.

For example, the investigation into the Laquan McDonald shooting was slow-walked in order to not interfere with Mayor Emanuel’s re-election campaign. Every step of the way bureaucrats within the administration blocked the truth from coming out.

More than anything else, the people of Illinois need leaders who don’t place their own political ambition ahead of the lives of the people they represent.

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) In order to build a fairer and more cost-effective system, the state needs major criminal-justice reforms. I would support policies that:

* Reform mandatory minimum sentencing: repeal laws that set a minimum number of years to serve for an offense, allowing judges to tailor punishments to each crime and individual circumstances.
* Roll back over criminalization: reduce laws that criminalize victimless activities and lead to overcrowded prisons, overextended public budgets and police militarization.
* Ease offender re-entry into society: remove state-imposed barriers, such as occupational-licensing rules, that prevent ex-offenders from finding work and integrating back into society.

Illinois’ criminal-justice system to needs to prioritize individual rights and fiscal responsibility. Therefore, legislators must reorganize the state’s corrections system to focus on rehabilitation and recovery, not simply punishment and incarceration.

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) There are several variables that I would need to consider before supporting such a program, such as the cost of implementation, the length of the time after the crime is committed before expungement and the nature of the crimes that could be expunged from criminal records.

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) Given there’s no overcrowding problem in the state’s juvenile justice system, [unlike](http://ilnews.org/4030/commission-to-address-prison-overcrowding-rehabilitation-and-other-criminal-justice-reforms/) adult facilities, closing the facilities may make sense.

Illinois stands to save millions by closing these facilities. The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has had an annual budget of over [$130 million](http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/budget/Documents/Budget%20Book/FY%202014/FY2014AgencyFactSheets.pdf) in recent years. The Warrenville youth center costs [$208,000](http://www.thejha.org/sites/default/files/Warrenville%20final%202015.pdf) per inmate and the St. Charles facility costs [$190,000](http://www.thejha.org/sites/default/files/IYC%20-%20St%20Charles%20Report_2013.pdf) per inmate. The state’s smallest youth facility, a minimum-security unit at Pere Marquette, holds [35 people](https://www.illinois.gov/idjj/Pages/Pere_Marquette_IYC.aspx) and costs $136,000 per inmate.

The DJJ also appears to believe that prisons are not the best place for juvenile offenders. According to its [2015 operating plan](https://www.illinois.gov/idjj/Documents/DJJ%202015%20Strategic%20Plan%20March%2020%202015.pdf), the state created the department because of “a growing recognition that a traditional prison-based system does not work well for youth,” and that youth prisons often do a “poor job” of providing mental-health, substance-abuse and educational services. It goes on to note that since many youth leave incarceration “posing a greater threat to the public than when they entered,” it’s not in the public’s interest to view incarceration as a solution to all of the state’s crime problems. It’s just one among several tools, and should be limited to cases where there are no viable alternatives.

In addition to high costs, the DJJ’s incarceration system had a recidivism rate of 48 percent in 2014. That means nearly 5 out of 10 people who leave the system end up reincarcerated within three years. Improving access to educational options or vocational programs that prepare youth offenders for work could help them keep away from crime and get their lives on the right track.

In short, the closures may be helpful to address the current budget gap, but they are only the beginning of what the state needs to bring costs under control while effectively addressing the problem of juvenile crime. Over the long run, evidence-based policies that help safely reduce the prison population will also be essential.

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) To be clear, I consider sex crimes especially heinous. While it is important that an individual is not stigmatized for something they did as a child, it is equally important to ensure that these juveniles are truly rehabilitated before they are allowed to be removed from the registry.

Amending the law or reducing consequences for adult sex offenders is dangerous, and defies the first responsibility of government, which is to provide for the public safety.

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

A) Regardless of how a judge is selected, politics plays a role. I believe that election of judges provides a better, more transparent method for selecting judges than so called “merit selection,” which generally happens out of the view of public scrutiny and accountability to the people.

**Other:**

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

A) Yes. The Independent Map Amendment is not a Republican initiative; it's a good-government initiative. The Independent Map Amendment will not take the job of drawing maps away from Democrats and hand it to Republicans. It will take the job away from politicians and hand it to the people.

It will dismantle the secret process through which partisan legislators rig the maps and replace it with one in which citizens are active participants. A fair map — produced by a diverse and independent panel, in broad daylight — will protect the interests of all voters, not just those of whichever party happens to be in power.

Under the amendment, an 11-member panel would take over the once-a-decade redistricting job. The panel would be required to respect boundaries of social, racial and geographic communities, instead of sorting voters into predictable Republican or Democratic districts. By keeping those communities intact, the maps would enable smaller groups of like-minded voters to form coalitions and elect representatives of their choice.

Under the current system, the two most important considerations are the voting history of residents and the addresses of incumbents. The resulting maps are so diabolically manipulated that the outcome in most districts is all but guaranteed. Many seats are uncontested.

A legislator who doesn't have to earn your vote doesn't have to listen to you. Competitive elections produce better candidates — and better, more responsive representatives.

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

A) Illinois currently has the highest unemployment rate in the Midwest. Since 2011, we’ve added more families to food stamp rolls than to employment rolls. We need to reform the some of the policies that discourage businesses from locating and growing here. I support responsible workers’ compensation reforms that reduce unnecessary cost pressures on job creators while at the same time preserving benefits for workers injured on the job. For example, employers should only be responsible for injuries that occur due to the worker's employment. They should not be responsible for injuries a worker suffers while commuting to a job. Another reform I would support would be to prevent an injured worker from "doctor shopping" to find a more sympathetic physician.

Illinois’s Tort Climate is the fourth worst in the country, following New Jersey, New York and Florida, according to the [U.S. Tort Liability Index: 2010 Report](http://special.pacificresearch.org/pub/sab/entrep/2010/Tort-Index/) from the [Pacific Research Institute (PRI)](http://www.pacificresearch.org/).

Illinois’s monetary tort losses and litigation risks are high and its tort rules are relatively weak.  Illinois ranks third worst for monetary tort loss and fifth for highest litigation risk.  Its tort system imposes excessive and undue costs on the people of Illinois and results in lost production of goods and services, higher prices, lower wages, restricted access to health care and decreased returns on investments. We need comprehensive tort reform to reduce excessive costs, stimulate the economy and create job growth.

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

A) I oppose it. Such a system only serves to codify Illinois’ tradition of election fraud. There is ample evident to demonstrate that automatic voter registration can lead to automatically registering non-citizens, and increased voter fraud and expense.

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

A) The state has implemented numerous ethics and campaign-funding reforms, with little change in how the state does business. In order to keep public officials accountable to the people they serve, I would support recall elections, fair maps and a repeal of the current campaign finance rules that limit the money an individual candidate can raise but leaves the caps off for party leaders.

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 most important teacher was Mr. Willard, my high school math teacher. He instilled in me from a very early age an understanding of the benefits of free market economics as a tool to increase wealth for all strata of society, not just those who are already wealthy or the politically connected.