**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE**

Name: Margie Reid

Ward: 7

Occupation: CAPS Community Organizer, Chicago Police Department

Education: Associates Degree International Academy of Design, Chicago, IL

Studied Fine Arts two years at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Previous political and civic experience:

I have never held nor run for a public office before at this level. However, I have been elected to two local school councils - one at Harlan High School and one at Ninos Heroes Elementary School. In addition, I started a block club in my community and have been actively leading it for the past 17 years.

**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?

I believe that city employees should earn the pensions that they have been promised and that they have earned. I do not believe that we can ignore the cities underfunded pension liability nor can we expect employees we've assured retirement benefits to solve this issue. I favor enacting new revenue sufficient to fund the city’s pension.

Chicago's pension systems for municipal workers and laborers already have 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?

I would be willing to support the generation of revenues through higher taxes and fees to maintain and improve vital public services as long as I was also supporting efforts to find long term cost savings in current spending.

**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 favor enacting new revenue sufficient to fund the school board’s pension.

**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?

I believe that you are kicking the can down the road if you do not find new ways to raise revenues and actually address spending and real needs in ways that are meant to have a long term effect. Short term solutions are a bandage but not an answer that will have a long term healing effect. That is why I would support revenue enhancements that would:

* 1. Reform the TIF
	2. Broaden the sales tax
	3. Institute a sales tax on large-scale financial transactions
	4. Tax non-Chicagoans commuting to work in the city

**4) Crime**

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

I would advocate for increases in the number of police officers and would advocate increasing the number of policemen in areas with greater needs. I believe that it is important to make sure that neighborhoods are safe

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

I would support legislation to prohibit the transfer or possession of assault weapons, 50 caliber rifles or large capacity ammunition magazines. The solution to stem the flow of illegal guns is to enforce legislation.

**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?

I would support a change to an elected school board. I believe that residents and educators should have a say in selecting members of the board. I believe this would allow more accountability to their constituents.

**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?

I support the increase and I support reforming the TIF program to keep the money in the area it was allocated.

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

I would work to use methods like tax credits and TIF which are tied to community-based hiring to attract new businesses and retain businesses in the community. In addition, I would work with the Mayor and City Council to find new ways to attract new businesses and revenue to the city and 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?

I believe the City Council should remain at 50 members. This is an adequate number to fully represent the number of constituents in a given ward (approx. 54,000) and allows an Alderman to comfortable address their issues, walk, talk, ride and inspect the ward. This also gives constituents a number of voices as opposed to fewer voices on the issues in city council as far as being heard.

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

I would be in support of a gambling casino in Chicago. This would retain revenue, attract business to the city and provide much needed jobs. I would propose revenue be designated for the Chicago Board of Education to insure that our schools provide quality education for all.

**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?

I believe we have enough red light and speed cameras. I also believe just as red lights cameras are at red lights, I believe school and park speed cameras should be at schools and parks not blocks away from the area of proposed safety.

**11) Ward issues**

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

My key priorities will be economic development. Bring new jobs and resources to the 7th Ward and to the City of Chicago is one of my highest priorities. By enticing employers to the 7th Ward and the south side of Chicago, we will be able to realize new economic opportunities. I am also committed to increasing job training which allows workers to get training so that they can secure new opportunities or so that they can progress within their current jobs. In addition, I would also concentrate on getting ex-offenders employed and making them productive members of the community.

 I also believe that it is important to make sure that neighborhoods are safe. Consequently, one of my top priorities for the City is to reduce crime and to empower residents to feel like the police are their partners in this endeavor. I believe that it is important to work with residents to increase awareness and secure their support in fighting crime and increasing safety in their communities. In my job as a CAPS Community Organizer, I have seen community policing work in positive and major ways that serve as deterrents for crime.

I support efforts to make every community in the city beautiful. However, I don’t believe that beautification can occur when we are constantly tearing down homes and not doing anything to enhance the condition of the housing stock and housing market. I would support efforts to encourage restoration of abandoned properties and houses designated for demolition and to increase new efforts to build within a community. I support the development of affordable housing. In addition, I would support efforts for families to buy homes and will work with distressed homeowners and put them in touch with resources to prevent mortgage foreclosure.

I would be negligent if I did not advocate and support the leaders in the ward whose good works often go unnoticed. By this I mean pastors, teachers, mentors, businesses, community organizations and block club leaders. I will support the talents and services of those who reside in my ward in their leadership with our youth and seniors. I believe that the city needs to do everything possible to ensure that seniors have affordable housing and support services to allow them to stay in their homes for as long as possible. I support tax freezes for senior homes and for investigations of mortgage companies and creditors that target seniors. Education is a priority and investments in our students and schools are important. I will support efforts to improve the quality of schools such as efforts to hire new or train existing teachers. I will also support increases in after-school programming, tutoring and job training programs to keep kids engaged, succeeding and involved in productive activities that will improve their chances of succeeding in life.