**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: **Glenda Franklin**

Ward: **17**

Occupation: **Executive Director**

Education: **Pursuing Masters of Public Administration (Roosevelt University)**

 **Bachelor of Arts – Business Administration**

 **Jones Commercial High School**

Previous political and civic experience:

**Founder and Executive Director of W.A.T.C.H. (What About The Children Here), a nonprofit dedicated to transforming youth into productive citizens throughout the Englewood & Auburn Gresham communities. I helped hundreds of youth begin their professional careers through partnerships with local and national companies such as Bank America, Department of Children Family Services, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation and SOS Children Villages of Illinois.**

**I served the 17th Ward as Staff Assistant to the Alderman’s office, where I fought urban decay by forcing banks and slum landlords to renovate their abandoned buildings. As the Secretary of the 17th Ward Democratic Organization, I also helped bring our community together through successful events like the annual Christmas in Englewood Toy Giveaway and Senior Luncheon, as well as the Southside Neighborhood Gospel Festival.**

**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: **It depends.**

Please Explain:

**Pension reform is a divisive, legal issue. I look forward to the Supreme Court shedding light on its legality. The entire issue needs to be a primary focal point of the City Council over the coming months and years, but we should not get ahead of the current review taking place at the State level so we are not continuing to waste time and taxpayer funds exploring options, only to have them deemed not viable or legal.**

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?

**Again, I think we should use the current legal review of pension reform as a point of departure. However, provided that pension reform is legal, I do think a certain amount of shared sacrifice will be required in order to adequately repair the damage done to the pension funds over the past decades of underfunding them.**

**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?

**See above questions.**

**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: **No**

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

Yes or No: **No**

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

Yes or No: **It depends**

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

**Before any discussion on taxes, I would like for Chicago to get its fair share from the State of Illinois. But, I do support progressive taxes and believe the well off can afford to pay more while middle class families need a break. I do not believe we can propose solutions with no real chance of achieving the goals we aim to achieve. Imposing taxes and fees has consequences and those consequences must be weighed against the potential revenue gain.**

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: **Yes.**

Please explain:

**I believe we need more police officers on the streets, especially in my community. We must hire more cops.**

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

**I would support any proposals that would reduce the number of guns on our streets, particularly more aggressive enforcement of existing gun laws, as well as introducing more common sense gun legislation. I also believe hiring more police would help with the issue.**

**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: **It depends.**

Please explain:

**I believe in democracy and accountability. I would like more details on a potential elected school board proposal before forming a final opinion, but giving people the power to hold their school representatives accountable seems perfectly reasonable to me.**

**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: **Yes.**

**As long as that money would go towards education or public safety.**

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

**The use of TIFs needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis. TIFs should be used to rejuvenate neighborhoods and bring new jobs to the city. And that is what they were established to do: to encourage investment and development throughout the City. The litmus test when allocating TIF funds should be how and what additional development will result from TIF funding being allocated to any project.**

**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 Founder and Executive Director of W.A.T.C.H. (What About The Children Here), a nonprofit dedicated to transforming youth into productive citizens throughout the Englewood & Auburn Gresham communities, I have helped hundreds of youth begin their professional careers through partnerships with local and national companies such as Bank America, Department of Children Family Services, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation and SOS Children Villages of Illinois. I will continue to advocate for these types of practical solutions as Alderman. I will also work with the Department of Planning to encourage more retail and commercial development in the underutilized areas of the City, particularly the communities that I will represent at 17th Ward Alderman.**

**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?

**Our community has long struggled to get adequate representation in City Council. I’m interested in consolidating other aspects of city government, but I will not support watering down my community’s influence by reducing the size of City Council.**

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: **It depends.**

Please explain:

**I believe that there needs to be a comprehensive analysis of the revenue projections as well as the overall impact that casino gaming would have on the financial and social health of the City of Chicago before I could get behind establishing a casino in Chicago.**

**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: **It depends.**

Please explain:

**I think this topic can only be discussed on a case-by-case basis. My support – or lack thereof – for red light traffic cameras is dependent on the location of the camera and whether or not it will help improve public safety.**

**11) Ward issues**

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

**Crime, economic opportunity, education and healthcare are issues that are very important to me and have colored my decision to run. I believe it’s time for the 17th Ward to have a *“New Normal”* – a future where children can walk to adequate schools and play where they live without fear; where families have ample opportunities to support themselves, and where businesses thrive through fair and supportive economic policies. The *New Normal* means bridging the gap between South Side and the rest of Chicago, and finally achieving the parity in quality of life our great city has long promised.**

**Beyond the above inequalities that I have seen in my own community, I am also a breast cancer survivor. If it weren’t for my healthcare, I certainly would not have survived. This is why I have always fought for complete and comprehensive access to healthcare, and will continue to do so if elected.**