

Name: Robert W. "Bob" Fioretti

District running for: State Senate - 5th District

Political party: Democratic

Political/civic background: 2nd Ward Alderman, City of Chicago. Chair, Historic Pullman Foundation. President, Northern Illinois National Alumni Association. President, NIU College of Law Alumni Council. Member, Character and Fitness Committee of the Illinois Supreme Court. Member, Judicial Evaluation Committee of the Chicago Bar Association's Executive Committee.

Occupation: Attorney

Education: Bachelor of Arts, University of Illinois. Juris Doctor, Northern Illinois University College of Law.

Campaign website: www.BobFiorettiforStateSenator.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 support a progressive income tax as well as an increase in the state's income tax on individuals and corporations. I believe that we need to develop a formula that would increase the tax on individuals earning more than \$50,000 starting at an additional 1% to as high as 6% on incomes \$1,000,000 and above. The sales tax is regressive, and the tax on retirement income would raise less than \$1,000,000.00. I do not view them as viable options.

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)

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 Illinois State Constitution is clear: pensions cannot be diminished nor impaired. We now have a 2-tiered system at the state level where the contracted benefits for new employees are at a different level. This could be expanded to other units of government. I have not seen any proposals that would pass constitutional muster.

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. Legislators should take a more active role and the concentration of power in a few legislative leaders should be diluted.

Education:

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

A) I believe that the funding formula should be revised to provide increased funding to less affluent districts and to reduce funding to more affluent districts.

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) Yes. The current practice shortchanges the Chicago Public School system. I fully support the Letter to the Editor sent by Forrest Claypool which describes the inequity in the current system.

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?

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) In the near term, in the interest of protecting the nuclear energy system, I could support the Exelon legislation as long as it provided caps on rate increases.

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) I could support increasing the Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard if it provided for caps on rate increases. I support the Illinois Clean Jobs bill.

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 cap-and-trade program is the lesser of two evils if we want to retain and attract manufacturing companies.

Gun safety:

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

A) I support tighter background check laws and limiting straw gun purchases. I also support tighter regulations for gun dealers.

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) I support allowing families to petition the courts to temporarily or permanently remove guns from people in crisis.

Criminal justice:

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

A) I support this legislation.

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) I support reducing by 25% by 2025 if not sooner. I could support reducing prison terms for non-violent drug offenses. I would support early release of aged and disabled prisoners who are assessed as "not a risk to public safety" as long as they are provided needed medical and/or mental health treatment. I believe that we have to expand funding of mental health treatment programs. There is a direct correlation between mental illness and, for example, violence. Our goal should be to provide treatment that helps to prevent criminal activity rather than solely treating them after incarceration. By some estimates, Cook County Jail is the state's largest mental health hospital. We have to start reversing that trend.

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) I do not support automatic expungement and sealing of criminal records for all crimes. I could not, for example, support it for rapists, child molesters, spousal abusers, and murderers, to cite a few.

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 that juveniles would have to demonstrate over a significant period of time and treatment, that they are unlikely to reoffend. At the very least, we should provide rehabilitation therapy to adult sex offenders but require at least a decade, and perhaps a longer period, of an offense-free lifestyle.

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

A) I support merit selection of judges as long as it is conducted by an Independent Merit Commission.

Other:

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

A) Yes.

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

A) I support the "Agreed Bill" process for workers' compensation because it leads to a fairer and more equitable result through compromises between labor and management.

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

A) I support expanded on-line registration and registration at a polling place as long as a proper ID is provided by the registrant.

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

A) Prohibit legislators from taking campaign donations from companies that have legislation pending before committees on which they serve.

Prohibit legislators from having employees on their state payroll and simultaneously on their campaign payroll. Employees paid with public funds should not be allowed to also serve simultaneously as paid Campaign Staff.

A) I support an increase in state funding for higher education with a proviso that would require a reduction in central administrative costs. The increased funding must be targeted toward improved classroom instruction and a modest reduction in tuition costs.

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) I support increasing the gas tax until the price of gas goes beyond \$4.00 per gallon. I would earmark the additional revenue as a source for the repayment of a Revenue Bond Issue that would finance infrastructure improvements, including public transit.

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

I believe that my answer to the previous question addresses this issue.

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. Provide a menu of tax incentives to attract and retain businesses.
2. Increase and reestablish Technical and Vocational Training in our Public Schools. This would generate a skilled work force for manufacturers and the construction industry.
3. Remove needless or unnecessary regulations that increase the cost of doing business in Illinois.

The recent decision of General Electric to bypass Chicago because of the state of our education system should give everyone the incentive to improve educational opportunities in our city.

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*

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 mother was the most important teacher in my life. She was incredible. A first generation American, she became a registered nurse, spoke seven languages and always believed and taught me to value and respect the views of others. When I was young, I remember her sitting at the dinner table on Sunday evenings translating letters for neighbors from relatives overseas.

She was a strong advocate for education and instilled in me a lifelong love of reading, learning and an appreciation of the notion that the formula for living a happy and fulfilling life includes being of service to others.

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