**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name:**Michael Duda**

Ward: **38th**

Occupation: **Retired City Worker**

Education: **High School/Trade School**

Previous political and civic experience: Worked for ward organization

**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: **No**

Please Explain:

**I don’t believe in reducing benefits but I would consider having the employee paying a higher percentage into the fund.**

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 not support an increase in property taxes.

**Again I believe the employees should pick up a larger percentage.**

**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?

**The employees should pick up a larger percentage of the funding that goes into their pension system.**

**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: **Yes**

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

**Adding a penny a share traded is not going to hurt the average investor.**

**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 the high crime areas in the city are undermanned they need more police presence and all new hires should be placed in those areas.**

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

**I would support any legislation increasing the penalties for anyone committing a crime with an illegal gun.**

**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: **No**

Please explain:

**I think it is best to keep the mayor accountable for the school board. If you have an elected school board you would end up with strong political organizations electing their own people to the board. It would be hard for anyone with a real passion for improving the schools to get elected on their own.**

**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: **No**

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

**I don’t think wealthy property owners should get any TIF money at all, especially in the downtown area.**

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

**I think lowering of taxes in general especially commercial real estate taxes would help small business owners. Also reducing the amount of fees they need to pay.**

**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?

**No I don’t believe in reducing it. It is hard for an alderman to be able to represent roughly 15,000 residents effectively.**

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain:

**I think it is foolish for Chicago not to have one. I think all profits paid to the city should go directly into the pension funds.**

**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: **No**

Please explain:

**I don’t believe the speed cameras are properly employed in the right areas and the red light cameras I think the fines should be restructured giving people a chance to correct their bad driving habits without hurting them financially.**

**11) Ward issues**

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

**A synopsis of what I talk about on the campaign trail will be sent to the residents several days prior to Feb 24th and will not disclosed until then.**