**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Name:** Joe Moore

**Ward:** 49

**Occupation:** Alderman

**Education:** Evanston Township High School, 1976; B.A., Knox College, 1980; J.D., DePaul University School of Law, Class, 1984

**Previous political and civic experience:**

• Alderman, 49th Ward (1991-present)

• Member, Executive Committee, Democratic National Committee (2005-2007)

• President, National Democratic Municipal Officials (2006-2007)

• Board member, National Democratic Municipal Officials (2005-present)

• Delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention pledged to Bill Clinton

• President, Network 49 (1987-1990)

• Delegate to the 1992 Democratic National Convention pledged to Bill Clinton

• Delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention pledged to Bill Clinton

• Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, 2000

• Delegate to the 2004 Democratic National Convention pledged to Howard Dean

• Member, Advisory Council, National League of Cities

• Board member, National League of Cities

• Board member, Local Progress

• Past Chairman, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee of the National League of Cities

• Past Chairman, Central Cities Council, National League of Cities

• Past Chairman, Cities for Progress/Cities for Peace

• Board member, Citizen Action of Illinois

• Past Board member, IVI-IPO

• Member, Northside Community Resources

• Member, Jargowood Block Club

• Member, Rogers Park Business Alliance

• Member, Friends of the Rogers Park Library

• Member, Kiwanis Club of Rogers Park

• Member, Friends of the Parks

• Member, Chicago Council of Lawyers

**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:** Yes.

**Please Explain:**

As a future retiree (hopefully, in the distant future) whose City pension will be my primary source of retirement income, I have a vested interest in this issue. I believe in a balanced approach that includes both new revenue to the pension funds and modest changes to benefits received by current and future pensioners.

In fashioning a remedy, we should always keep in mind that our City employees and retirees did not cause this crisis. They paid their contributions to funds at the statutorily required amounts. Our political leadership failed the employees by refusing to take into account the actuarial consequences of providing increased benefits and early retirement programs without the financial resources necessary to pay for them. And their union leadership failed them by advocating for increased benefits without challenging Springfield to provide the necessary revenue.

That being said, the taxpayers simply cannot afford to carry the sole burden of resolving the pension crisis. The unfunded liability is simply too great. Modest changes to the benefits received by current and future pensioners must also be part of the calculus. As much as I would like to receive a guaranteed 3% annual compounded COLA on my pension, such a benefit simply is not sustainable and the pension system will collapse under its own weight if such benefits are allowed to continue. In short, as a future City pensioner, I would rather receive a slightly reduced pension benefit than no pension at all.

In determining exactly what burden the pensioners should be asked to bear, a sliding scale should be applied. Those slated to receive larger pensions should bear a greater sacrifice than a pensioner receiving a very modest pension.

The agreement reached between then Emanuel Administration and union leaders to resolve underfunding of the municipal and laborers pension funds serves as a useful roadmap to address the police and fire pension funds.

**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?**

The City undoubtedly will be required to provide significantly more revenue to resolve the pension crisis. Until the Illinois Supreme Court provides clarity on just how much the pension fund benefits can be changed, it is difficult to determine the exact scope of revenues and service cuts that will be needed.

I would support finding additional revenue sources if they are coupled with meaningful efforts to increase government efficiency and cut waste, fraud and abuse. If additional revenues must be put in place, we should make every effort to make sure that the additional burdens do not fall disproportionately on poor and middle class taxpayers.

**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 addressed potential measures to ensure a solvent retirement system in my answers to the previous 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:**

Yes. Our system for raising revenue is based on a manufacturing economy in which the sales of goods, such as books and computers are taxed, but services escape taxation. This omission is not the result of a conscious policy choice, but a historical accident. When Illinois enacted its sales tax, services were a relatively small part of consumer spending. However, our economy is increasingly becoming a service-based economy. Services now represent nearly 70 percent of individual spending and are the fastest-growing area of consumption. Unfortunately, Illinois’ system of taxation has not adjusted to this changed economy, which is one of the principal reasons that state and local governments are increasingly strapped, forcing drastic reductions in services, especially for those who are the most vulnerable in our society.

Expanding the tax base to include more services helps to address the inequities posed by our sales tax system. In short, it is a much more fair way to raise revenue because services tend to be consumed disproportionately by wealthier people.

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

**Yes or No:**

No. Such a tax is likely unconstitutional. Even if it could withstand a constitutional challenge, it likely would invite retaliation by suburban communities, who could enact their own non-resident tax, thus affecting the many Chicago residents who work in the suburbs.

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

**Yes or No:**

Yes. But it may also require federal legislation. Federal law may pre-empt states from enacting a financial transaction tax.

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

See my responses above.

**4) Crime**

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

**Yes or No:**

**Please explain:**

The call to hire more police officers is an easy one to support until you look at the actual cost. According to the Chicago Justice Project, a new Chicago police hire costs the City at least $100,000 a year. Adding a thousand new police officers to the rolls would cost the City’s taxpayers $1 billion dollars over a ten year period. If the city could afford an extra $1 billion dollars to spend over a ten-year period, I believe spending it on education and social services rather than on more police would get us more bang for our buck in reducing crime.

Moreover, no one has shown a correlation between the number of police officers employed by a city and the crime rate. Los Angeles has almost half has many police officers per capita as Chicago and yet enjoys a drastically lower crime rate. New York City has approximately the same number of police officers as Chicago but also has a much lower crime rate than our City.

Instead, I believe the quality of policing is much more important than the quantity of police. Selective use of voluntary overtime and greater emphasis on community policing to build bridges of trust between the community residents and the police are far more cost effective crime fighting tools than simply hiring more officers.

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

I supported and voted for Mayor Emanuel’s ordinances that placed restrictive measures on conceal-carry and the possession and sale of guns in the City of Chicago.

**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 members and the Schools CEO. Do you support a change to an elected school board?**

**Yes or No:** No

**Please explain:**

The key to improving public education is accountability. This is why I am very skeptical of a proposal for an elected school board. It diffuses accountability. Under a mayoral appointed school board, one person is accountable for the direction of our schools—the mayor. If the schools are not performing to the satisfaction of the electorate, the voters can replace him or her with a new mayor. Indeed, if Mayor Emanuel is voted out of office in the upcoming mayoral election, it will be largely due to his handling of the school teachers strike and the closing of 50 schools.

Finally, it is important to note that an elected school board does not guarantee thoughtful and progressive education policy. Decisions made in other school districts to ban books, prohibit and teaching of evolution and prevent gays from teaching were made by elected school boards.

**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:**

I have supported and continue to support returning unneeded TIF surpluses to the coffers of the taxing bodies.

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

I support TIF reform that tightens up considerably on the criteria for forming a TIF. A TIF should not be created if it does not satisfy the “but for” clause, i.e., but for the TIF, the economic development activity would not occur. Additionally, existing non-performing TIF districts should be disbanded and their funds distributed to the various taxing bodies. The Mayor and the City Council have disbanded a number of non-performing TIF districts over the last several years.

As I note above, I have supported and continue to support returning unneeded TIF surpluses to the coffers of the taxing bodies. I have supported and co-sponsored various measures from both the Paul Douglas Alliance and the Mayor that provide for more TIF transparency. As a result, ordinary citizens can now go online and determine exactly how much revenue exists in each TIF and measure their performance.

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

Since I was first elected alderman, I have made economic development and job creation one of my top priorities. When I first took office, I convinced the City of Chicago’s Planning Department to merge three poorly funded, duplicative and largely ineffective business organizations into one well-funded and effective development corporation and chamber of commerce. Now known as the Rogers Park Business Alliance, the organization consistently ranks as one of the strongest business development agencies and chambers of commerce in the City and has been a valuable partner with me as we have overseen the revitalization of Morse Avenue and Jarvis Square and the more nascent but promising revitalization of Howard and Clark streets.

One of my crowning achievements was the creation of Gateway Center, a multi-million dollar shopping center that brought new retail jobs and amenities to my community, including a full-service grocery store. Up until Gateway opened in 1999, my neighborhood had been without a full-service grocer for over half a decade.

Most recently, when Dominick’s announced it was closing its Chicago area stores, including its Rogers Park store at Gateway Plaza, I asked Mayor Emanuel to appoint me to his Grocery Store Task Force where I made sure the Rogers Park location was front and center on the Task Force’s agenda. I worked closely with the chairman of the Task Force, Deputy Mayor Steve Koch, and together we took advantage of the Mayor’s known penchant for gentle persuasion to convince Jewel-Osco to include the Gateway location in its list of new stores.

My wife, Barbara, and I were instrumental a few years ago in launching the Glenwood Sunday Market, which not only provides Rogers Park residents of all incomes, fresh, locally grown and produced vegetables, fruits and meats, but also brings hundreds of paying customers to the Morse-Glenwood business district every weekend. Despite its overwhelming popularity in its first year, it wasn’t clear the Glenwood Market would survive another year. So I convinced the Rogers Park Business Alliance to take the Market under its wing and I assigned one of my staff assistants to serve part-time as its market director. As a result, the market is financially solvent and has become a Sunday morning institution.

Not only do I work to bring more businesses to my community, I also work to encourage new and existing businesses to hire community residents. My office frequently refers employers to the Howard Area Employment Center, an organization whose funding I advocate for. The Center works with ex-felons to provide them with the training, skills and resources they need to secure gainful employment and turn their lives around.

Finally, recognizing my neighborhood is primarily a “bedroom community,” my office sponsors twice-a-year job fairs where I pair employers outside my community with residents in my community. Dozens, if not hundreds, of ward residents have found employment through my job fairs.

I will continue to make economic development and job creation a top priority.

**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?**

Though the proposal to reduce the size of the City Council has surface populist appeal, those advocating such a “reform” should beware of what they wish for. Thirty-five years ago, a young populist reformer named Pat Quinn championed a referendum to reduce the size of the Illinois House of Representatives. The referendum passed and the House of Representatives was reduced by a third. No money was saved and many thoughtful independent and progressive leaders in both parties lost their seats, concentrating power in the hands of the legislative leaders. This concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders ironically proved to be one of Pat Quinn’s biggest obstacles to governing when he became the State’s chief executive.

Unless a reduction in the City Council is accompanied by a sea change in what Chicagoans expect of their aldermen, I believe the voters would live to regret adopting a proposal to reduce the size of Chicago’s legislative body. One of the unique attributes of the current system is that aldermen are immediately accessible to their constituents. Few, if any, large cities provide their residents with this close connection to their elected representatives. The aldermen, in turn, are able to learn the ins and outs of their respective communities unlike any other City official.

Most of the proposals call for the City Council to be reduced by half, from 50 to 25 aldermen. If that were enacted, each alderman would represent 114,000 constituents, instead of 57,000, and the geographic size of their wards would in many cases more than double. The need for larger aldermanic staffs would wipe out the vast majority of cost savings, and the voters would lose the immediate accessibility to the alderman and their staff that they have come to expect.

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

**Yes or No:**

**Please explain:**

My position on this issue has evolved. I was once adamantly opposed to casino gaming, but given that legalized gambling has become ever more present in our state and region, I would be open to a proposal for a casino in Chicago. As one observer has noted, Chicago already has a casino. It’s in Hammond, Indiana. Chicago should receive the job and revenue benefits and not export them to other areas of our state and other states. However, before I sign onto a casino in Chicago, I would like to know the details of the specific proposal.

**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:**

**Please explain:**

The Active Transportation Alliance, a long-established organization that advocates for bicycling, walking and public transit, strongly supports the cameras because they believe it encourages safe driving and save lives. I supported the installation of the cameras largely based on their vocal support.  
  
However, recent studies commissioned by the Chicago Tribune report call into question whether the cameras actually result in fewer accidents. They also question the methodology of the City’s research. These studies raise serious concerns. I will urge the Emanuel Administration to review those studies and, if necessary, obtain a reputable outside traffic study firm to conduct a thorough and statistically sound analysis that is beyond reproach to determine if the cameras are actually effective at reducing accidents.

**11) Ward issues**

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

1. Promoting and enhancing public safety and police/community relations through community policing, both in my ward and citywide.
2. Promoting economic development and job opportunities.
3. Promoting government transparency and civic engagement through initiatives, such as participatory budgeting.