**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: Proco Joe Moreno

Ward: 1st Ward

Occupation: Alderman, 1st Ward

Education: BA, Augustana College ; MBA, DePaul University

Previous political and civic experience: Founding member of the Wicker Park Chapter of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP), Former National Board Member of the CEDP, Elected twice to the Local School Council of Jose De Diego Elementary, Board Member of the Young Democrats of Cook County, Delegate for presidential candidate Governor Howard Dean, Board Member of Humboldt Park Social Services, current Democratic Committeeman of the 1st Ward, current Alderman of the 1st Ward

**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 to reducing current benefits

Please Explain: The workers did not contribute to our problems. Let us not play into this false choice that there is a “a bad choice and a worse choice”. I support a sales tax on services IF the revenue stream can be dedicated (codified by law) to debt and pension obligation reduction and funding for our schools. Currently, if a working class family of four spends $400 at the grocery store, they pay a sales tax. However, if a single individual spends $400 on a "day at the spa", they pay zero sales tax. As our economy moves further and further to a service economy, we need to recognize that this is a question of "Fairness in Taxation".

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 can’t see many circumstances if we enact my previous example along with approving a Chicago casino. I know it is “popular” to say we need to cut more, but that is disingenuous as we cannot cut our way out of this problem.

**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

**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 (see above)

\* 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.

I have explained my views besides a tax on electronic financial transactions. A small tax for such transactions would raise millions while not stifling investment. I have researched and found not one study that proves otherwise. Scare tactics are all that are given by those that oppose such a tax. Markets will adapt and Chicago will continue to house a healthy exchange arena.

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain: I support overtime to a point. But the bottom line is that police officers are human beings that get tired like the rest of us. We need to invest in more police officers rather than continuing to rely on those that may not be at their best on the 50th or 60th hour of their work week.

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

Mandatory minimums on those that commit crimes with guns. Serial code registration for all guns sold.

**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: Yes

Please explain: I circulated petitions to get enough signatures to get the question "Should the voters of Chicago elect the School Board?". We prevailed and it will be on the ballot in February. I do not believe any other Alderman (or candidate) actually organized their own petition drive to get this important question on the ballot. The main reason I support some form of an Elected School Board is that we need parent (of Public School children) and teacher voices represented on the Board. However, an elected School Board is not a panacea for reform. If we do move in this direction, perhaps a hybrid model (some members elected, some appointed), would be appropriate. I also think candidates for an Elected School Board should have some qualifications before running for this office. A lot of our Local School Councils (LSCs) have vacancies and I would propose that any candidate serve at least one full term on an LSC before running for Board Commissioner.

**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

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

Unfortunately, TIF legislation that was intended to help "blighted" parts of our city has been grossly abused. That is one reason I voted, along with 10 other Aldermen, to declare a surplus on TIF and put the money back into our schools and other taxing bodies. I believe and support declaring a surplus in all TIF districts that exist in areas that are not considered "blighted". I have two TIF districts that overlap my ward. I have supported TIF funds to be used three times because the dollars went to improving our schools/ education. We used TIF funds to build badly needed playgrounds at two Public Schools. We also used TIF funds to refurbish a portion of Presence Hospital to house a modern, nursing school that was formerly housed in the suburbs. I have seen no evidence that expanding TIFs in my ward to be a net positive benefit for the community. I have repeatedly stated that we need to publicly abolish TIFs, and create no more, in parts of the city that are not considered “blighted”.

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

I believe each Alderman has to not only vote yes or no on plans that come from the Administration, but also and as important, craft their own legislation to deal with our unfunded pension liability and economic development. For almost ten years, the city has struggled to pass a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance. Many other cities have this type of progressive development codified in their local laws. I authored and passed the first TOD ordinance of its kind two years ago. It allows for residential density to be built near our hard rail system, in the neighborhoods. My TOD ordinance reflects the needs and will of a growing population of Chicagoans-- those that do not want, have or need a car. The TOD ordinance is bearing fruit as the first TOD building was built two years ago- 99 residential units, 10% truly affordable units, no parking, inside bike parking, on site car sharing. The building is fully occupied and generates approximately $300,000 in tax revenue a year. This $28 million project replaced a one story dilapidated Pizza Hut that had sat vacant for almost 10 years. 150 construction jobs were on site for almost two years, and the retail and office portion of the site employs dozens of Chicagoans. If not for the TOD ordinance, the empty Pizza Hut would likely still be there. The TOD ordinance has legs as we just passed an ordinance (supported by the community) to build a second TOD building on Milwaukee Ave. Currently, three additional TOD proposals are moving through my community review process. Most candidates will talk in platitudes about economic development. I intend to continue to author and sponsor ordinances, like the TOD ordinance, that specifically address economic development.

**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?

IF it can be proven to me that the city would save money, without having a depletion of city services, I would support the council being cut in half.

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain: See above

**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: Yes… and No

Please explain: I only supported one red light camera in my ward where a pedestrian was hit from a motorist who blew a red light. Like all technology, it can be used for the good of the people, and for the bad. Right now, we have to audit the way we are manning our red lights. AND, have Alderman ready to stand up when more red lights are proposed for sections of their ward that the evidence does not support (as I have done on several occasions).

**11) Ward issues**

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

Clean streets, safe streets, good schools. My ward is one of the most economically diverse in the city. These three issues are on the top of mind of all of my constituents- regardless of income. I believe we have met their needs in the last four years and I look forward to exceeding their needs in the next four years. This is based on my track record of providing results--- not platitudes.