

## 2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: William "Dock" Walls, III

Occupation: Owner - American Shirtshak <http://dockwalls.wix.com/shirtshak>

Education: Walls Graduated Horace Mann Elementary and Chicago Vocational High School; Tuskegee University, with honors, 1980; Graduated from IIT-Chicago-Kent College of Law, 1986.

Previous political and civic experience: Community Activist; Dock served as Confidential Assistant to the Mayor, from 1983 to 1986; National Political Director to Rev. Jesse L. Jackson's Rainbow PUSH, served as the main Illinois surrogate for John Kerry in his 2004 bid for U.S. President

### 1) Top Priorities

Please name your top three priorities for the city, and explain how you will make changes in those three areas.

Among my highest priorities will be to change the focus of city government from beautification and infrastructure improvement to Economic Development.

One goal is to use Capital Improvement Funds to provide Chicago businesses the wherewithal to compete in the National and Global Economy and bring new revenue, jobs, and Industry back to Chicago, Illinois. A related goal is to utilize TIF funds to develop grocery stores in those communities which are classified as "Food Deserts." Each of these initiatives has the potential to create sustainable private sector jobs. (Both are explained in greater detail below). Consistent with the theme of jobs creation, through public initiatives, private initiatives and comprehensive tax reform we will stimulate the City's economy to foster Full Employment. Additionally, we will program the Mayor's office of Employment and Training to train and re-train adults,

Another of my highest priorities is to provide a superior, free education for each and every individual child. That effort begins with my commitment to the development and maintenance of neighborhood schools with comprehensive curriculums and extra-curricular activities. That includes a healthy mix of CPS schools and Charter schools. As mayor, I will reopen the 50 schools Rahm recklessly closed. Those buildings will be "education first facilities" with a "mixed use" component. Those sound structures will be refurbished and restored to their primary use as neighborhood schools. However, to make this economically feasible, and reduce the burden on

taxpayers, we will modify each building to also accommodate, a Police Sub Station; A Regional or Local CPS office; A WIC office; A Neighborhood DHS office, and a student therapy facility. Given the proper design, these several essential community service providers can safely and efficiently co-exist in the same structure.

The last of my three priorities is to implement several cost saving initiatives and measures designed to increase cost effectiveness and energy efficiency without negatively impacting safety or service.

Pursuant to that, I will cut the Procurement Department red tape, unbundle government contracts, allow bidders to lease equipment subject to transparency requirements, provide wrap up bonding and insurance, and establish a City Start-up Capital loan for equipment and payroll, to enable more contractors, vendors and suppliers to respond to Requests For Proposals and offer competitive bids. This is likely to reduce costs by as much as ten percent (10%).

I will cut City of Chicago's government utility costs by using modern efficiencies and technology to heat, cool, light and regulate lobbies, offices, and conference rooms throughout all City of Chicago facilities. This may reduce costs by as much as four million dollars (\$4,000,000).

I will cut the flow of administrative paperwork by fifty percent (50%). This will reduce purchasing, handling and storage costs by twenty percent (20%).

Also, we will reduce the City of Chicago debt service. I will transition Chicago from the current "Debt to Fund Services" revenue and expenditure system into a "Pay As You Go" revenue and expenditure system. This debt to fund Services system, which is like using your credit card to pay rent, is too reliant upon Municipal Bonds, General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds that result in an obligation to pay interest. Over a period of six-years (6 year) we will utilize unused TIF funds, savings from increased competition in bidding, and savings from delaying low priority infrastructure repairs. When this thoughtful transition is complete, the city of Chicago will save more than nine hundred million dollars (\$900,000,000) in interest, annually. Additionally, this will result in the city of Chicago having a constant reserve fund and ultimately encourage the bond rating agencies to increase the City's weakening Bond Rating.

Additionally, as Mayor, I will offer city employees the option of a ten hour a day, four day a week, forty hour work week. This would reduce daily start-up costs as well as reduce personal and public energy consumption.

## 2) 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 strongly believe governments should be legally required to make pension contributions every year.

The city's Pension obligations are now \$37.3 billion. In 2016, the city is required by law to make a \$550 million contribution to shore up police and fire pension funds with assets to cover just 29.6 and 24 percent of their respective liabilities.

The Illinois legislature passed a bill cutting pensions and raising the retirement age for state workers, in the hope of saving a hundred and sixty billion dollars in pension costs over the next thirty years. The fate of that legislation rests in the hands of the courts.

We must keep our commitment to longstanding city employees. However new hires should have lower cost-of-living adjustments and their employee contributions should be increased. Trim retirement benefits and pay higher wages.

We must employ a defined contribution system as opposed to a defined benefits system.

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 only support a property tax increase to fund the pension systems after all other options were exhausted. That includes an internal overhaul of the administration of the various pension systems.

Municipal Employees and police pension funds pay substantially less in management fees than do the firefighters and laborers pension funds. We must Improve investment returns and reduce the millions of dollars in fees

paid to investment managers.

### **3) 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?

In 1995 the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund was nearly 100% funded. Despite Illinois law requiring the Chicago Public Schools to fund the CTPF by 90% by 2045 Teachers and paraprofessionals made their contributions as required. Between 1995-2005 CPS collected more than \$2 billion in pension tax revenue and contributed zero to the pension fund. Instead, CPS repeatedly took pension holidays over a period of 10 years. CPS the requested pension relief in April of 2010 in the amounts of \$400 million per year until 2013.

I suggest the State of Illinois provide the Chicago Teacher's Pension Fund the same funding it provides to the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) which benefits suburban and downstate pension systems. this will be equivalent to over \$2.5 billion in annual support.

### **4) 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

\* 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: No

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

#### Sales Tax Expansion

Lower-income taxpayers are more negatively impacted by Illinois highly regressive sales tax which concentrate mainly on tangible goods. Arguably, inclusion of certain services used more often by higher-income people, like landscaping, transportation services, and other similar services, in the sales tax base would help to lessen the regressive nature and effect of our sales tax.

Our service sector economy accounts for a much larger proportion of consumer spending and production. Broadening the tax base might allow the tax rate to be lowered. This would help bring balance to Illinois tax structure.

#### Non Resident worker Tax

I initially proposed a resident worker tax in 2007. Since that time we have completed impact studies which suggest it is highly likely that suburban municipalities are likely to reciprocate in retaliation, to the detriment of the many Chicago residents who work in the suburbs.

#### Additional Revenue Source

Currently, the city of Chicago relies upon seven primary sources of revenue, including Real Estate tax, Income tax, Sales tax, Federal aid, State aid, Motor Fuel tax, Public Utility tax and Fines, fees and assessments. I will utilize "Naming Rights" as a non tax form of revenue. Excluding City Hall, we will provide opportunity for companies and individuals to rename public buildings, facilities, and other city assets according to their wishes. Unlike Privatization, the city would retain complete control over these assets.

#### Transaction Tax

Even a \$1 Chicago Mercantile Exchange and Chicago Board Options Exchange tax levied on the sellers and buyers of futures, futures options and securities option contracts traders would be excessive and would discourage traders who don't necessarily have to initiate their trades from Chicago. This proposed tax would hurt more than it would help.

### **5) Economic development**

What will you do as mayor to bring jobs to the city and boost economic development?

### Business Development Grants

Rather than provide the customary tax break incentives to Fortune 100 companies in an attempt to convince them to relocate their headquarters in Chicago, we will focus on the assistance and development of local Chicago businesses. Consequently, we will establish a series of Public-Private Partnerships funded by \$1 Billion dollars of the City of Chicago's existing \$7.9 Billion Dollar Capital Improvement Program. Specifically, over a period of four years, we will identify 1,000 small to medium sized Chicago based businesses, which are industry and geographically diverse, and provide each of them a \$1 million dollar jobs creation grant. There shall be strict administration of this grant program. The disbursement of funds will be periodic and tied to the attainment of standardized benchmarks. Monitors will ensure strict compliance with all established guidelines. Our goal is to help these reputable Chicago businesses grow; introduce their products, goods and services into the national and global stream of commerce; increase production; and create 50 sustainable jobs. Overall, this initiative will result in a total of 50,000 permanent private sector jobs.

### Grocers Community Owned and Operated

This Government Funded and Community Driven initiative is a Public-Private Partnership which will take four years to complete. It will be funded using the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) available in the targeted TIF district areas. Ultimately, this initiative will result in the creation of 20 Big Box Grocery stores, 60 mid-sized Neighborhood Markets, an estimated 5,000 Construction jobs, 20,000 permanent Grocery Store Industry jobs, and 25,000 residual, self-perpetuating, private sector jobs.

Our goal is to bring relief to Chicago's underserved communities. Specifically, we endeavor to significantly reduce Chicago's comparatively high unemployment level and help eradicate the Food Deserts which persist and debilitate 27 of Chicago's 77 Communities.

The average cost of development and completion will be Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) for the Big Box Grocery stores and Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000) for the mid-sized Neighborhood Markets. The total program cost, including the purchase and preparation of the real estate, infrastructure development, building costs, and the purchase of equipment and goods, will be Six Hundred Million Dollars (\$600,000,000).

## **6) Crime**

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

Yes or No: No

Please explain:

To immediately reduce the number of violent crimes, I would declare a State of Emergency. I would institute a series of specific actions to quickly alleviate the root causes of increased crime and violence, and thereby reduce the unacceptable level of danger.

Pursuant to that meaningful declaration, as Mayor I would direct the Superintendent of Police to Conduct high visibility Outdoor Roll Calls in and around high crime areas: Conduct Outdoor Police Academy Recruit Training sessions in and around high crime areas: Stop all police Parking Ticket writing activities: Limit Police Traffic Court appearances to those involving personal injury, auto damage, DUI, drugs or weapons: Station police cars near parks, schools and libraries until they are dispatched to respond to calls, upon completion of that call, they will return to their assigned spot; Implement flex districts which would allow beat officers from low risk beats (relatively safe beats) to provide support in high risk beats; Replace the vast majority of sworn officers presently assigned to office and desk duty with civilians and reassign those officers to street beat patrol (foot, bike, and horseback).

Police officers will be outfitted with Body Cams which will be synchronized with Dashboard cams. To reduce police overtime, Police Department clerks will review footage and document police encounters and arrests. The involved officer(s) will sign off on the clerk generated police reports.

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

I would support legislation in Springfield designed to increase the number of law enforcement officers patrolling our ports, airports, waterways, railways and highways. These are the major access points through which illegal guns are smuggled into the state and into Chicago. Also, I would support harsher sentencing of persons convicted of crimes and conspiracies to smuggle illegal firearms into Chicago.

## **7) 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: Yes, I support a change to an elected school board.

Please explain:

I will support an elected Chicago Board of Education. We will establish eight single member districts with a president to be elected at large. The legislation must include safeguards to avoid the hijacking of the election by powerful, well funded organizations, PACS, unions and other special interest groups. The enabling legislation must be carefully drafted to include strict campaign financing and spending limits, and thereby ensure that ordinary and average individuals have an equal opportunity to win election.

### **8) 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:

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

Tax Increment Financing (Commonly referred to as "TIF") is a program governed by state law which authorizes municipalities to capture property tax revenues derived from the incremental equalized assessed value (EAV) above the base EAV that existed at the time the area was designated a TIF district. The derivative money is to be used for community projects, public improvements, and incentives to attract private investments to the area.

I support the use of TIF Funds to facilitate the building of low-income housing, Grocery stores and community approved economic development projects in blighted areas. I support measures to provide greater transparency in the reporting of the amount of TIF Funds diverted from the secondary taxing bodies. We must include the amount of funds directed to TIFs on Property tax bills and through regular publication and notification as requested by renters and various city residents.



TIF's should sunset as originally scheduled and ancillary taxing bodies should receive the funding needed to fulfill their core responsibilities.

We must stop the practice of Porting TIF funds into neighboring TIF districts as a means of diverting funds from blighted communities into those which are not blighted.

I am opposed to the use of TIF funds to build the DePaul Arena and the Marriott Hotel because the cost to the community outweighs the benefits.

### **9) 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?

Chicago was designed as a weak mayor, strong council form of government. Is there a power imbalance between Mayor Daley and the City Council? On which issues should the mayor lead? On which should the council lead?

The overall Chicago City Council voting record, which is available through the office of the City Clerk, clearly evidences the fact that Chicago Aldermen vote in favor of major legislation, proposed by the Mayor, ninety-two percent of the time.

According to a 2008 University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Political Science and Developing Government Accountability to the People (DGAP) report, "There have been only thirteen divided roll call votes in the first eleven months, averaging 1.2 divided votes per month similar to approximately 1.8 per month during the last eleven months before the new council was elected in 2007." The numbers are relatively the same in 2010.

It has often been expressed that the City Council is nothing but a Rubber Stamp for Mayor Daley. Many of the Daley proposed and City Council approved ordinances have fleeced the public. For example, the nonsensical 75 year Parking Meter lease deal which, on its face, was fatally flawed. Daley hastily provided it to the Aldermen and all but five of them voted to pass it two days later.

With the advent of technology, the city of Chicago has developed a sophisticated, computerized, 311 system which effectively interacts with the public and addresses their concerns. Thus, residents rarely phone their alderman with requests for information or to request routine city services. Aldermen no longer handle the bulk of resident complaints. Walls said "Many city services like street sweeping garbage pickup and some non emergency

police services could be more effectively and efficiently performed on a grid system basis.

Chicago is in need of serious reform. More and more concerned citizens are asking, "Why are we paying fifty Aldermen \$110 Thousand Dollars a Year to simply vote Aye?"

In light of the foregoing, I propose we use our home rule powers and cut the City Council by fifty percent (50%) over a period of five years. That action would streamline our city government, which is growing out of control, and save taxpayers billions of dollars. This strategic reduction can be accomplished through a combination of attrition scheduled mergers and remapping

Apparently, the majority of our Aldermen are not independent thinkers who vote to protect the interest of residents of their Ward. Therefore, As Mayor, I will encourage the City Council to be more deliberative without being obstructionist.

The Mayor should lead on issues pertaining to the overall development of policy affecting the entire city. The Aldermen should take the lead on matters that can be implemented on a ward by ward basis.

### **10) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: No

Please explain:

Casino gambling is fine for entertainment and recreational purposes. however, many of Chicago residents approach gaming opportunities as a means of increasing their otherwise fixed incomes. Those persons are highly susceptible to the advertisements and inducements which blatantly encourage excessive and compulsive gambling. Families, and particularly children, must be insulated from the potential devastation that could result if a head of household was to fall victim to the lure of gaming facilities made so easily accessible.

I would only support a Chicago casino beyond the security checkpoints at O'hare and Midway airports.

### **11) 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. The number of Red Light cameras is excessive.

Please explain:

I do not favor the use of mechanical devices as the primary means for the enforcement of minor traffic infractions. Instead, I favor highly visible devices which broadcast or reflect a drivers speed, or warn of a possible violation. The city's objective should be to ensure compliance and adherence to the law. Thus, minimally intrusive warnings should be sufficient to accomplish that objective. If further enforcement is deemed necessary, it should be done by law enforcement officers.

I would eliminate the, so called, red light cameras. "Yellow has become the new red" at known camera enforced intersections. Drivers are programmed to obey with reckless abandon. Consequently, drivers slam on their brakes early to avoid possibly getting ticketed. Recent city of Chicago statistics indicate an increase in the number of rear end collisions at intersections known to be enforced by Red Light Cameras.

As Mayor, I will return the ill gotten \$7.7 million due to drivers unfairly ensnared by Rahm Emanuel's policy of shortened yellow lights at camera enforced intersections.

My administration will eliminate ticketing for Speed Zone violations, based solely upon the camera footage.