**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: Guadalupe Rivera

Ward: 16th ward

Occupation: Teacher for Chicago Public Schools

Education: Bachelor in Education

Previous political and civic experience:

**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 believe we have more options to fund the pension system without reducing current benefits. One way we can do so is by enacting a commuter tax on those who travel into the city only for work each day. I also believe that we should consider taxing more services in the city of Chicago. If the tax base is expanded to certain services, millions of dollars can be generated.*

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 don’t think I could look the people of my ward in the face if I agreed to raise property taxes. I will be alderman for one of the poorest wards in the city. People in my ward struggle to survive for everyday needs. If their property taxes were to be increased it would cause a burden on them to afford their rent or homes, which would mean that they would be forced to move out of the city.*

**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 believe we have more options to fund the pension system without raising property tax. One way we can do so is by enacting a commuter tax on those who travel into the city only for work each day. I also believe that we should consider taxing more services in the city of Chicago. If the tax base is expanded to certain services, millions of dollars can be generated.*

**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

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

Yes or No: Yes

\* 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.

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain:

*As an educator and living in my ward my entire life, I see the growing need for my city to have more patrols and more officers on the streets to help reduce crime. I would be alderman of a ward with high crime and the safety of the people is a necessity*

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What legislation in Springfield would you support to try to stem the flow of illegal guns into 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 membersand the Schools CEO. Do you support a change to an elected school board?

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain:

*I wholeheartedly support an elected school.  Many of the schools on the Westside would have not faced closure if we had some one from our community representing us. The criteria for a Chief Executive Officer should include a background in education, years of experience, and should be hired by the elected school board and not the mayor.*

**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?

*First I believe in transparency when it comes to TIF dollars. I believe the best way to ensure that our TIF dollars are spent effectively is to have the residents of my ward decide how the dollars will be spent. I believe in a participatory budget process where residents can vote and give their ideas on how the TIF dollars are used.*

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

1. *I would use TIF dollars to help promote and create community owned businesses.*
2. *I want to create a youth summer jobs programs in my ward that will give the youth opportunities to earn money, learn responsibility and to keep them off the streets.*
3. *I want to create an ordinance in my ward that states that if there is a construction project, half of the workers have to be from my ward to help create more job opportunities*
4. *I support a 15 dollar minimum wage that will put more money into people pockets and generate revenue for businesses and the city which will then create more jobs.*

**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?

*I have no comment on this because I do not have enough information on this issue.*

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No:

Please explain:

*Yes. I understand the need for a casino that could generate billions in revenue for the city..*

*Yes. I support the need for a casino. A casino could potentially generate billions in revenue for the city.*

**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:

*I believe that we need to get rid of all the speed cameras and red light cameras in the city.*

**11) Ward issues**

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

Supporting local community schools, crime rates and how they are approached and tackled, and rights of undocumented people. I believe that in order to make this neighborhood a place we love to live in, big changes need to take place.  I believe that to decrease poverty rates education needs to be supported.  Local community schools, teachers, students and every community member needs support in furthering their education.  I believe that in order to decrease gang violence and crime a different approach to the problem needs to be taken.  Introducing programs like Restorative Justice that bring every community member to the table, and provides spaces and opportunities for conversations about issues and concerns within the ward, only with programs like this can real change happen because everyone becomes an accountable partner in the change our community needs. I have fought for the rights of undocumented people.  If you are living in the community, then you are a member.  If you are paying taxes, supporting local business, and your children attend our community schools then your voice is important too and must be heard.