

## 2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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Ward: 18

Occupation: Ward Superintendent City of Chicago

Education: Studying Business Management/Marketing

Previous political and civic experience:

Democratic Committeeman

### 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?

**No:**

Please Explain: **Any new or added revenue should be directed to the pension fund.**

**Example: Red light tickets, speeding cameras, and increased revenue from city sale tax and real estate transfer tax.**

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?

**Along with reduced expenditures for non-essential services, I would consider supporting a property tax increase to balance the city budget and pay down our debts including pensions.**

### 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 city council does not run the public school system. I would support an elected school board to make sound decisions.**

### 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

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

No:

\* A tax on electronic financial transactions on Chicago's trading exchanges, known as the "LaSalle Street tax"

No:

Please explain your views, if you wish, on any of these three revenue-generating measures.  
**I would support an expansion of the sales tax base statewide. Electronic financial transactions can be done anywhere, they're here now paying taxes in Chicago. If taxed, businesses in the City of Chicago would leave, move outside city.**

### 4) Crime

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

Yes:

Please explain: **Public safety is my number one priority, without a safe environment we can't maintain strong neighborhoods, safe schools, and vibrant business districts.**

What legislation in Springfield would you support to try to stem the flow of illegal guns into Chicago? **I would support and work with resolution task forces to balance the concerns of the community, while still protecting the citizens right of the 2nd Amendment of the**

**constitution. I would support legislation that fights; straw purchasing, unlicensed dealer penalties, and the examination of current gun running.**

#### **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:**

**Please explain: I feel that with an elected school board, the board has an obligation of operating in the best interest of the voting body than that of the person that appointed them.**

#### **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:**

**What reforms would you propose for the city's TIF program? Once the TIF area has been developed and the payback of bonds has been satisfied, excess funds should be returned to the taxing bodies.**

#### **7) Neighborhood economic development**

**What would you do as alderman to boost economic development in your ward, and bring jobs to your community? I would use TIF funds to restructure and revitalize my business strips. The priority should be for projects that create permanent jobs after projects are built, not just in 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? **50 as it is.**

**I feel that taxpayers should have a strong accessibility to the person that represent them. Each ward has approximately 50-60,000 residents, an increase in that number may hinder representation.**

#### **9) A Chicago casino**

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

**Yes:**

**Please explain: As long as about 85% of the jobs created are city residents. The taxbase that it incurs, should be earmarked to city pension funds and public schools.**

#### **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?

**No:**

**Please explain: Not only are they are not equally deployed throughout the city. they are in locations that don't make sense. example:**

**79th and Pulaski- why would camera be posted after you pass school instead of in block before school to slow traffic down for safety?**

**79th and Talman- no entrance or exit at location for school. Kids enter and exit school over two block and around the corner away.**

**67th-71st and Kedzie- No pedestrian crossing in the center of this stretch. fenced golf course one side of street.**

**This gives the perception of revenue based only.**

#### **11) Ward issues**

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

- 1. The decline of city services/ public safety**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Economic development**