Name: Robert Zwolinski (Bob Z)

District running for:  4th

Political party: Democrat

Political/civic background: Founder/Head Coach Wells High Shool Rugby Club- Founder of The Peace Corner Youth Center Associate Board--East Village, Board Memember

Occupation: Sales Director

Education:  University of Kansas

Campaign website: [www.electbobz.com](http://www.electbobz.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses

Taxes/Budget:

Q.  Illinois has a massive state debt and crushing pension debt. Many elected officials from the governor to state lawmakers have indicated there is a need for additional revenue to help balance the budget.  If Illinois needs to generate additional revenue, which options would you support in a budget package:

1.     Increase the state’s income tax on individuals or corporations, either temporarily or permanently.

2.     Expand the sales tax to services.

3.     Tax retirement income in excess of $50,000.

4.     Adopt a progressive income tax.

If you oppose all tax hikes, please provide specifics on how you would reduce state spending by $7 billion to balance the state budget.

A)  A mix of 1,2,3- We need to have a budget freeze on all departments while we conduct an Audit.  The audit should be from the many accounting companies we hire.  Offering their services for free.

Q) Do you support another legislative attempt at pension reform? If so, which proposed changes in the pension system would you support that you believe would pass constitutional muster?

A) Another attempt of pension reform should be done with the cooperation of the Unions.  I'm open to any attempt that could be made with Unions being brought to the tables.

Q) Do you support a budget template developed by a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators that would allow members to pass a budget without the consent of the legislative leaders?

A) Yes.

Education:

Q) What, if anything, should we do to change how we fund schools?

A) We can't just keep throwing money at our school systems without re-evaluating the structure of CPS and how that money gets distributed & managing those expectations.  Principles need to be able to allocate their own budget.  We need decentralize CPS.

Q) Do you favor the state picking up the pension costs for Chicago teachers, as the state does for teachers outside Chicago? Do you favor school districts outside Chicago picking up their own pension costs, as Chicago does now?

A)   We need to honor the pension system that we set but moving forward we need to stay with the 403b plan for all teachers.

I support school districts outside of Chicago picking up their own pension costs.

Q) State support for public higher education has declined for two decades. Do you favor the status quo or a significant increase in state funding? What is your plan to restore Illinois’ leadership in public higher education?

A) We need to increase our funding but at the same time boost the outreach of public higher education. Encouraging our graduating High Schoolers to attend our in State Schools.  We need to ensure we are updating our courses to meet the needs and wants of students, i.e. more nursing programs for the growing market, Engineering, etc.  We need to secure top Professors in those fields that will help engage and gain more students.

Transportation:

Q) Illinois has a tremendous backlog of infrastructure needs: roads, bridges, waterways, transit. What would be a good way to pay for it? Do you support an increased gas tax — and/or other taxes and fees — to finance infrastructure improvements, including public transit?

A) I don't believe in higher gas tax, the gas tax is already way to high.  If Chicago decides to allow Gaming in the city we need to ear mark an "x" amount of that tax to go to our infrastructure.

 Q) Illinois’ public transportation formula provides money for operating costs, but not capital costs. Should Illinois create a reliable funding stream for capital costs?

Yes, a balanced approach is necessary.

Jobs:

Q)  Illinois has long been a strong manufacturing state. Today, Illinois employs fewer than 600,000 manufacturing workers and manufacturing’s share of the Gross State Product has dropped to 12.4 percent.  Our state saw the loss of nearly 10,000 manufacturing jobs in 2015 and announcements from some high-profile companies of job losses. The average manufacturing job pays more than $70,000 and helps create a strong middle class.  Name the top three things that you would do to help attract and retain manufacturing jobs in Illinois.

A) creating tax breaks for new businesses coming to Chicago

B) Vocational job training, increasing our pool of skilled labor

C) Active recruiters going to States to collect and recruit companies to come back to IL.  Assess their needs and how we can lure them back or to IL.

Energy:

Q)  Illinois has a very diverse energy portfolio and is a net exporter of energy in a deregulated marketplace. Energy is poised to be major issue in 2016 because of federal regulations and possible changes in Illinois’ energy portfolio. Nuclear energy emits zero carbon emissions at a time when the new federal rule requires Illinois to reduce carbon emissions by 44 percent. Do you support or oppose legislation backed by Exelon to create a low-carbon portfolio standard?

A) Yes

Q)  Illinois’ current Renewable Portfolio Standard calls for Illinois to procure a certain percentage of renewable power by the year 2020.  The state is only halfway to its goal, and there is a proposal to increase the required amount of renewable energy and extending the time period to meet that goal. Do you support or oppose increasing Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard even if the cost of power increases slightly? Do you support or oppose the Illinois Clean Jobs bill?

A) I support Illinois Clean Jobs Bill & believe over time we will be able to reduce our carbon foot print and attract more business by demonstrating our ability to be a leader with the global invective for clean energy.

Q)  Illinois has to reduce carbon emissions by 44 percent under the federal rule.  Do you support creation of either a cap-and-trade program or a carbon tax to help mitigate carbon emissions in Illinois?

A) I support a Cap-and-trade program.  If companies can easily and cheaply hit their numbers then should be able to benefit from that.  Creating a carbon tax is deterring more businesses to not entering the State.

Gun safety:

Q) Do you support tighter gun background check laws? Do you support limiting straw gun purchases?

A) yes.

Q) Do you support or oppose state licensing for all firearms dealers?

A) support

Q) Do you support or oppose allowing families to petition the courts to temporarily remove guns from people in crisis?

A) support

Criminal justice:

Q) Do you support or oppose legislation to promote the transparency and preservation of police disciplinary records?

A) Support

Q)  Do you support the goal of reducing the Illinois adult prison population by 25% by 2025? Would you support sentencing reform such as reducing or eliminating prison terms for non-violent drug offenses? Would you support early release of aged and disabled prisoners predicated on an assessment of risk to public safety prior to release?

A) Support across the board.  Our prison population for non-violent prisoners are costing the State substantial amount of money.

Q) Do you support automatic expungement and sealing of criminal records for all crimes after an appropriate period during which the former offender commits no crimes?

A) Not for all crimes, violent repeat criminals, sexual predators, etc.

Q) Given that there are more empty beds than youth now in the juvenile prisons, do you support closing one or more juvenile prisons?

A) Yes.

Q) What is your view on a proposal to end the placement of juveniles on the state’s sex offender registry based on assessment of their risk and likelihood to reoffend and/or benefit from treatment? For adult sex offenders, what is your view on delivery of rehabilitation therapy and limiting sex offender registry restrictions only to those men and women assessed to pose a danger to others?

A) For Juveniles it would have to be a case by case.  I believe in rehabilitation therapy but still keeping them on the registry for adults.

Q) Do you support a form of merit selection of judges?

A) Yes, would be opening to reviewing the pros-cons.

Other:

Q) Do you support the pending constitutional amendment to create an independent commission to draw legislative districts?

A)  Yes.

Q) What changes in workers’ compensation or tort reform do you favor?

A)  We need to eliminate the "frivolous" lawsuits", which tie down our court systems & companies resources.

Q) Do you support or oppose automatic voter registration?

A)Support, we need to get more people engaged in politics.  It's the voters choice to show up to the polls.  There’s a large gap up younger voters who aren’t aware of where & even how to register.

Q) What sort of ethics and campaign-funding reforms does the state need?

A) We need to put caps on the amount of money that candidate can receive in a local election.  Money in politics now controls every facet of Government.  It has gotten out of control.

Q) 2016 is going to be a big year in education, as both state and the City of Chicago wrestle with fundamental issues of funding and school policy. Who was the most important teacher in your life and why?

A) Mrs.Doyle, I'll be the first one to admit that I wasn’t the easiest or best behaved student.  But she was the one that believed in me, she would fight for me and pushed me to stop being a punk and to focus on classes.  I hope she reads this.