**Name: Napoleon Harris III**

**Office running for: U.S. Senate**

**Political party: Democrat**

**Political/civic background:** While playing in the National Football League, State Senator Napoleon Harris founded the Napoleon Harris Foundation to support the growth and development of children in his community. Later, he pursued public office to ensure the voices of working families are heard in the halls of government. Notwithstanding his critical work in the community and in the Illinois General Assembly Harris believes his most significant accomplishment is providing jobs and economic opportunity for the people who need it most. Napoleon Harris takes pride in meeting a monthly payroll, helping people from his community earn the income they need to provide for their families. In the Illinois legislature Napoleon stands on a record that reflects his values as a parent, business owner and community leader. He sponsored the bill that ensures all high school student athletes have full coverage should they sustain a catastrophic injury. Napoleon helped bring infrastructure dollars to complete the intermodal transportation hub in the 15th Illinois Senate district; and to connect Interstate 57 and 294 expressways. These major infrastructural improvements will help solidify the Chicagoland area as the heart of America’s network of distribution channels. He also pushed hard for summer youth employment programs and was a strong voice in the General Assembly for increasing the minimum wage. For Senator Harris, none of his achievements are as satisfying as those that bring honor to his family and a smile to his Mom’s face, including earning a degree from Northwestern University, being drafted first round to the NFL and returning to his community to help working families.

**Occupation:** Owner of Beggar’s Pizza Franchises, Illinois State Senator

**Education:** Bachelor of Science, Communications Northwestern University; Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship, Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Business

**Campaign website:** NapoleonforIllinois.com

**Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses**

**Legislative priorities:**

Q) *What are your three top legislative priorities for the country?*

1. **Small Business Growth**
2. **Approving Qualified Supreme Court Judges**
3. **Criminal Justice Reform**

Q: *What are the three most important issues in Illinois on which you believe the federal government needs to act?*

1. **Education**
2. **Stimulating Job Growth and Economic Opportunity**
3. **Eliminating Gun violence**

Q) *What is your biggest fundamental difference with your opponent(s)?*

**The most critical difference that distinguishes me from my opponents is my independence as a business, government and community leader. My opponents are staff bureaucrats whose bosses, Dick Durbin in Congresswoman Duckworth’s case and Bill Daley in Andrea Zopp’s case, have propped them up to run for office. My opponents have fed from the trough of patronage jobs and have generally drawn their wages from the hard earned dollars of taxpayers. I have no bosses. I have earned my own way in business. My life work has focused on contributing jobs and economic development as a small business owner not living off of the government’s dime. Another very important difference is my personal experience grappling with the challenges most Americans are facing today. I grew up poor; I know what it’s like to struggle, work hard and earn my own way in life. My family has been directly impacted by the scourge of gun violence. I understand the terror of gun violence under which many communities live and the unspeakable grief that visits a home struck by senseless murder. I know from personal experience what it’s like to be discriminated against and racially profiled by police officers. I also know what it takes to emerge from the dark corners of poverty and fear and fight back against hardship and low expectations. Unlike my opponents I know what policies actually help working families and which ones are making it harder for them to get ahead. With a little help from my family, a caring community, committed teachers and sports coaches and a hand up from government programs I worked my way into a life that me and my family can be proud of—one with dignity and self-respect. That’s my story. My opponents’ stories are very different.**

**Transparency:**

Q) *Will you pledge to make public: a) your campaign schedule; b) your fundraiser schedule and the names of all fundraiser hosts ; c) if elected, your daily schedule of meetings? If not, why not?*

**Yes.**

Q) *Please list all relatives on public or campaign payrolls and their jobs on those payrolls.*

**None**

**National security:**

Q) *What are the most important actions the Senate can take to reduce the threat of ISIS abroad and at home?*

**First, we must keep our commitment to the international community and admit the 10,000 Syrian refugees. By turning away from refugees in their time of need we send a message that the U.S. does not care about their plight and this may drive internally displaced persons to seek refuge in ISIS camps. Not only is this the right thing to do, it is also likely that several refugees will have valuable information on ISIS, which we can leverage in the war against terror and to help build our crimes against humanity case against them. I support publicly prosecuting ISIS leaders in The Hague courts to expose the evil of terrorism. Second, while the U.S. must lead the effort to defeat ISIS, this effort must involve significant contributions from countries in the region. Executed through a global coalition, we need to improve our human intelligence of ISIS leadership and operations, deploy leading-edge technology to identify and locate their bases and movements and launch low-risk military attacks, like drone strikes. I do not support negotiating with terrorists; nor do I support deploying American ground troops to fight ISIS at this time.**

Q) *What bans, if any, do you support on Muslim admissions to the United States? Please explain your position.*

**I do not support any ban on admitting Muslims into the U.S. because they have not demonstrated any more of a propensity for violence than any other group in our society. We are facing cyber and financial threats from China, military aggression from Russia and gun violence from homegrown Americans. I recommend addressing these threats before considering a ban on Muslims.**

Q) *Specifically, how would you have, or how did you, vote on the American Security Against Foreign Enemies (SAFE) Act of 2015 and its efforts to make it harder for Syrian and Iraqi refugees to enter the U.S.? Please explain your position.*

**I would have voted against it. As I mentioned above, I support admitting Syrian refugees into the U.S. as quickly as possible. Here’s what we know: there are thousands of Syrian refugees who began seeking asylum in the U.S. several years ago. They have been vetted and background checked—we can start by admitting those refugees who have already been approved. Second, the same way that justice delayed is justice denied—so too for Syrian refugees who are literally facing life and death circumstances: help delayed is help denied. We cannot implement a vetting process that takes two years, which is the recommendation of the SAFE Act, when refugees are facing immediate peril.**

Q) *Do you support a Syrian no-fly zone or the U.S. enforcement of Syrian humanitarian safe zones? Why or why not?*

**I do not support either one for the same reasons. A Syrian no-fly zone is very expensive and difficult to enforce. Moreover, I am not sure how effective it would be against ISIS or Assad’s forces because air power is not their strength, so it’s unclear who/what we will be stopping via a no-fly zone. I also believe no-fly zones simply provide American targets for terrorists to attack. American air pilots who patrol and enforce the no-fly zone may be shot down and if they are captured I am certain they would be brutalized in the most heinous ways by ISIS. This would only serve to lure the U.S. into all-out war. Lastly, a no-fly zone in Syria where Russia is actively engaged would require some kind of collaboration with Russia or else it could lead to conflict with them.**

Q) *Regarding the House Benghazi Select Committee, should its investigation remain open-ended, or should the panel be given a deadline to complete its work? Please explain.*

**It should remain open ended, however it should focus on all the attacks on American embassies of the past 45 years, not just Benghazi. There were scores of attacks on our embassies during the Bush years, a very spectacular attack on our embassy in Nairobi under President Clinton’s watch and hundreds of American diplomats have been killed while in service since the 1970s. This is a long standing problem that needs to be addressed. As a U.S. senator I would seek appointment to this committee and dedicate my efforts to securing the safety of American diplomats so that American diplomacy can thrive throughout the world. For the record, I strongly repudiate the way the Benghazi committee has used taxpayer dollars to hurl political and ad hominem attacks at Hillary Clinton.**

Q) *What measures, if any, do you support to give U.S. authorities access to encrypted or “dark web” communications about potential terrorist plots? Please explain.*

**I support government surveillance of dark web online communications. However, I believe this access should be limited to times when our threat levels are high and we have probable cause to believe that attacks are imminent.**

Q) *Do you support transferring the detention of terrorism suspects from Guantanamo Bay to the United States? Why or why not?*

**Yes. I support closing the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Terrorists or enemy combatants, who have been “rendered incapable of fighting” and are securely imprisoned in American prisons pose no threat to Americans. I believe we need a detention camp for the purpose of holding international terrorist criminals, but it must have some level of transparency and must adhere to the ethical standards set by the Geneva Conventions.**

**Gun violence:**

Q) *What is the single most important action the Senate can take to reduce U.S. gun violence?*

**The federal government can reduce gun violence by providing American cities the same intelligence gathering, violence intervention and conflict resolution resources that it does to prevent civil conflict in foreign countries in order to prevent gang wars, bloody feuds among drug cartels and domestic terrorists who threaten our safety from within. The U.S. and the international community have had some success against civil conflict including Suni-Shia, Pakistani-Indian and Serb-Muslim conflicts. It is widely known that inner-city gun violence is vastly the work of a small number of individuals and street gangs who are responsible for the preponderance of murders, particularly here in Chicago. The federal government must gather human intelligence to find out who these criminals are, deploy leading edge technology to surveillance and capture them and put them away.**

Q) *Do you support or oppose the ‘‘Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act?” Please explain your position.*

**I support it. While I fully support the Second Amendment and Americans’ right to bear arms, I do believe some checks are necessary to reduce the probability of mass shootings. Terrorist plots that are successfully carried out have a lasting impact on Americans far beyond the individual persons and families directly impacted by its violence. Terrorism strikes fear into entire communities, undermines our economy and emboldens our enemies. These attacks cannot simply be prosecuted after they are carried out they must be prevented because of the widespread and lasting impact they have on our society. For this reason, we must take drastic measures to ensure terrorists do not have access to the instruments of terrorism, including firearms and explosives.**

**Climate change:**

Q) *Do you believe there is scientific evidence of climate change, and is it caused by human activity? What is your position on the Paris climate change agreement?*

**I support the Paris agreement and I do believe that climate change is caused by human activity. Climate change is a global threat. I am encouraged that the Paris Agreement sought solutions with global reach. My support of the Paris Agreement is rooted in my support for reducing the use of fossil fuels. This agreement goes a long way toward reducing carbon emissions from fossil fuels and goes a step further by seeking to remove carbon emissions already in the atmosphere. Preserving the environment is a crucial component of public health, trade and energy efficiency/independence. I applaud the Paris Agreement for considering all these factors in its charter.**

**Economy:**

Q) *What changes, if any, to the U.S. tax code do you support and why?*

**I support tax credits for small businesses, particularly tax credits for investing in training and education. Investing in human beings is always a good investment. We need to encourage companies to develop their employees so that they are not only more productive, but also more innovative. It is the combination of innovation and productivity that constitutes America’s advantage in the global economy.**

Q) *What are the most important actions the Senate can take to ensure the solvency of Social Security?*

**The Social Security Expansion Act sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders clearly demonstrates a path to solvency through 2074, while current projections show a depletion of Social Security funds by 2034 if no change is enacted. Sanders’ bill achieves this feat by taxing more income of wealthy earners and taxing investments more aggressively. This bill also employs some innovative actuary tactics including using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) to calculate the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The Social Security Chief Actuary predicts this change would increase the COLA by an average of 0.2 percentage point per year. I support this bill and would vote for it, given the opportunity.**

Q) *Do you support a “risk fee” on big banks? Why or why not?*

**Yes. Banks are 37% larger now than in 2008 when the collapse occurred. The larger and more leveraged they become the greater risk they pose to our economy. For banks, it pays to grow as large as possible. The more assets they have in their portfolio the more likely it is the government will bail them out should they crash. This is a privilege and safety net big banks enjoy at the expense of credit unions, community banks and all working families in America. They should and must pay a risk fee that protects working families against their irresponsible actions. It is clear that we do not have the political resolve to adequately regulate the size and predatory behaviors of banks nor do we have the courage to prosecute their CEOs even when they commit the most egregious crimes. At the very least, we should make them pay a fee for the impunity they enjoy.**

**Health care:**

Q) *Should Obamacare be overturned, left intact, or changed — and if so how?*

**Obamacare has provided access to quality health for nearly 20 million Americans who, otherwise, would not have had real, quality health insurance. When I am elected to the U.S. Senate I will fight back against any efforts to repeal the ACA. However, as a small business owner I believe that an extension beyond two years of the small business tax credit would encourage small businesses to hire new employees or give current ones a raise without fear of burdensome health care benefit costs. There are 28 million small businesses in American, which account more than half of sales nationwide. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy but payroll taxes for small businesses have a depressive effect on hiring. I believe the ACA, by extending the eligibility period for small business tax credits, could help in this area. I would also support extending coverage beyond just children under the age of 26 but allowing coverage for any person who lives in the same household with the primary policy holder.**

Q) *Do you favor stripping federal funds from Planned Parenthood? Why or why not?*

**No. Planned Parenthood provides critical personal health services, information and advocacy just like other well-respected healthcare and health advocacy organizations who receive funds from the government.**

**Immigration:**

Q) *President Obama used his executive powers to prevent the deportation of "DREAMers—youths who came to the U.S. illegally as children with their parents. Would you support legislation to prevent DREAMer deportations? Do you support putting DREAMers on a path to citizenship?*

**Yes. Deporting children who have struggled to make something of their lives, stayed out of trouble, worked hard in school and contribute to the cultural diversity of this great nation is bad public policy. Dreamers should be allowed to pursue a path to legal citizenship.**

**Education:**

Q) *What reforms do you favor to address America’s student loan crisis?*

**First, I will join the Senate Education Committee and demand an investigation into loan servicers' practices. Loan servicers have a conflict of interest with their clients - the longer students are in debt the more money they make on Wall Street. Federal student loans are 98% guaranteed by the taxpayers - so the system makes money off the backs of taxpayers without incurring any risk.**

**Second, I would advocate for two crucial reforms: 1) implement the "Pay As You Earn" payment plan limiting loan payments to 10% of someone's income; and 2) allow federal student loans to be wrapped into mortgage payments, so college graduates can buy homes instead of just paying off debt.**