**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: **Jocelyn Hare**

Ward: **5th Ward of Chicago**

Occupation: **Post-Graduate Urban Fellow at the University of Chicago Harris School for Public Policy**

Education: **BA in Sociology, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2003); MPP in Urban Policy, Harris School for Public Policy at the University of Chicago (2013)**

Previous political and civic experience:

 **As a board member of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance for six years, I worked with policymakers at the local, state and national level to design/organize for/pass Safe Schools legislation. I believe great schools are the anchors of our communities and also a primary mechanism for improving neighborhoods. In my work at CPS and UIC, I also had the fortune of interacting with multiple levels of government, as well as private, nonprofit and foundation organizations.**

**I currently work as the Harris School’s first Post-Graduate Urban Fellow under the Richard M. Daley Distinguished Senior Fellowship Program. Much of my work is focused on The Gary Project, an initiative established between Chicago Harris and the City of Gary, Indiana where graduate students from UChicago gain hands-on urban policy experience. At the same time, the City of Gary receives pro bono policy consultation on pressing local government issues.**

**Over the past three years, I’ve worked with local government, tech groups and hundreds of volunteers in Gary to lead and pioneer a mobile phone survey app, designed to map levels of housing conditions in the City. From the data collected through the survey, I’ve worked with the City to win over $6.6 million in grant funding for large-scale demolition of the most dangerous properties and the repurposing of those lots. Gary Mayor Freeman-Wilson has shown me how much work can be accomplished with smarts, creativity, collaboration and passion.**

**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: **Depends**

Please Explain:

**Watching my own family struggle over when to retire from public service jobs based on what benefits may or may not be available was heartbreaking. No workers should have to worry about these types of decisions or if their full and promised benefits will be compromised. I fully support policies that honor commitments to workers.**

**We should exhaust all available options for increasing funding to meet our pension and long-term debt obligations before exploring higher taxes and fees. We need a review of the city’s potential revenue streams and its raw assets--buildings, land, etc--to see what makes sense to sell off. Further, the city should take a look at how to reform TIFs to make sure that we aren't losing revenue there. In areas where there are inefficiencies, I would recommend looking at freezing or cutting spending.**

**I think it’s smart to keep an eye on states with legalized and taxed cannabis (Colorado, Washington, etc) as a potential revenue-building model for Illinois. If we must seek new revenue, I would support a proposal to tax those earning more than $1 million per year while giving Chicago’s middle class families the financial relief they need.**

**For any policy decision I would consult with experts in the field and work with Chicago residents to shape strategies amenable to all sides. I believe a more inclusive and public process for problem solving the city’s pension crisis is in the best interest of the city.**

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?
**Please see above.**

**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?

**Please see above.**

**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**

**I support a reasonable expansion of the sales tax to include more consumer services, especially if it helps fund education or helps us bring solvency to our pension system. However, I would like to see details on the proposed services being taxed before fully committing.**

A tax on non-Chicago residents who work in the city
Yes or No: **No**

**My initial sense is that this policy could drive more jobs out of the city.**

\* A tax on electronic financial transactions on Chicago’s trading exchanges, known as the “LaSalle Street tax”

Yes or No: **Yes**

**I support this measure, but at a level where it won’t make Chicago's trading exchanges less competitive.**

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

**Please see above.**

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: **Maybe.**

Please explain:
**We need to do more in the community to support the Chicago Police Department. Residents should be encouraged to use technology such as social media to document and report suspected criminal activity in their neighborhoods. As alderman, I would also host community meet and greets in each precinct of my ward so neighbors can get together and establish a network for sharing information and getting to know their beat patrol officers. I believe offering more opportunities to the youth in my ward is one of the best ways to combat crime and gun violence in the 5th Ward.**

**A big concern in the 5th Ward is lack of transparency with the UChicago Police. While Chicago PD must report and publish its data, UCPD are exempt--meaning residents do not know who is being stopped, arrested, and targeted. This lack of transparency is creating major distrust between residents and police. I’m hopeful the University decides to release its data on policing.**

**Relationships with residents and police are strained across the nation. It’s time we build a new model of policing--one where residents and police work together collaboratively for the better of the city. I think implementing police trainings and professional development to better work with youth, women, rape victims, LGBTQ and homeless folks would go a long way to changing the current climate.**

**To improve public safety, we must have more opportunities for youth. Schools should be looking at models of restorative justice for discipline, rather than punitive measures. The best way to reduce crime is to increase resources and opportunities in impoverished communities. In Gary, we target abandoned buildings as they are magnets for crime. By working to eliminate blight in concert with increasing opportunities for residents, and improving relations with police and first responder trainings, I believe we can lower crime rates in the 5th Ward.**

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

**I support smart, common-sense gun legislation that’s based on data and best-practices from across the country. I am encouraged that Illinois has now banned certain domestic abusers from owning guns and also for improving its background checking system. To try and stem the illegal flow of guns into Chicago, I support the following legislation:**

**-licensing/registration for gun dealers**

**-firearm registration for owners**

**-prohibition of assault weapons and large-capacity rounds**

**To decrease the demand for illegal guns, we must offer more and better opportunities to our residents. Decreasing the demand will drive down 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: **Maybe.**

Please explain:
**I support the democratic process and will work to find ways to get local neighborhoods and residents more involved in school control. I would like to study alternate models of school board control before committing, but I’m confident there are ways of increasing public participation in the school board’s appointment.**

**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: **Yes.**

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

**To improve the TIF process, the city should increase its transparency. I would like Chicagoan residents to be able to clearly understand how projects are selected, who decides what developers and contractors will be used, and who benefits from the TIF projects. We must ensure the tool isn’t used in a way that ultimately displaces poor residents from the neighborhood. I would like to see an analysis by someone who has modeled all the tax consequences of TIF and can demonstrate that it doesn’t negatively impact public services in the long run. This information should be made public.**

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

**Impoverished communities often fail the “market analysis” test that businesses use to determine whether to invest in a neighborhood. Depressed housing prices, higher unemployment and lower incomes frequently deter private companies from setting up shop in poorer areas. By executing an alternative market analysis, I hope to provide investors a more accurate picture of the economic opportunities in the 5th Ward.**

**My first task in office would be to complete a Community Asset Mapping project to identify all of the resources in the community - health services, pharmacies, shops, schools, etc. After mapping that data, we’ll be able to see exactly how far residents have to travel to reach certain types of businesses (groceries, for example, in South Shore). This type of analysis will show us where our “holes” are - in terms of what’s needed in the community. Working with residents, I’d come up with a plan to target specific businesses to fill those holes.**

**My priority is to support local businesses and also bring in new ones. There is a desperate need for a grocery store in South Shore. For new developments, I’d like to look at enacting local hiring ordinances to ensure local residents are getting the jobs in their neighborhoods. In Gary, we’re working on several jobs initiatives involving business incubators, workforce development training in the steel and trucking industries, and working with ex-offenders to deconstruct the many abandoned homes.**

**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?
**Chicago, while the 3rd largest city in the US, has the largest number of councilmen in the nation. I think it’s fair to investigate the costs and benefits of having this type of arrangement. With less alderman, you increase greater accountability of those elected officials. Many residents have no idea who their alderman is or what function they serve.**

**With fifty aldermen, the danger is having too many disorganized aldermen to be an effective counterweight to the executive, resulting in the mayor always being the strongest political voice, and aldermen always having disproportionate interest/control over issues that are local to their ward. In this type of system, coalition-building is incredibly important. On the upside, the current arrangement allows for aldermen to really be connected to their constituents. I support leaving the Council at 30 until I have a better understanding of the alternatives and their costs and benefits.**

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: **Yes.**

Please explain:
**I support smart policy around casino gaming in Chicago – one that does not negatively impact our under-resourced communities and guarantees good-paying jobs and new revenues.**

**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: **Maybe.**

Please explain:

**I support the cameras long as the goal remains to promote public safety. We should keep a close eye on the implementation of these cameras and make sure they are always fairly monitored. I personally understand the burden of paying these hefty fines and why residents dislike them. The program should remain in place but the data collected should be made public for constituent oversight.**

**11) Ward issues**

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

**The 5th Ward is quite uneven, resource-wise. In speaking with thousands of residents, I’ve learned that Hyde Parkers care very much about overdevelopment of the neighborhood and ensuring we keep high standards of safety and security. In the South Shore, Woodlawn and Grand Crossing neighborhoods, concerns are dramatically different: gun crime; job training; access to healthy foods; blighted vacant buildings and access to quality public schools are what my constituents care about.**

**Across the 5th Ward, messages repeated regardless of constituent:**

1. **We want strong neighborhood schools.**
2. **We want safe streets.**
3. **We want opportunities (access to resources; jobs; volunteer and mentorship; athletics; arts; etc).**

**My experiences working with Gary, Indiana, combined with my background in public education, training in urban policy and my ability work with diverse groups of people have given me extraordinary preparation to serve as Alderman of the 5th Ward. I believe Chicago is ready for new leadership that’s committed to better government, data-driven solutions, transparency, green policy, and--perhaps most importantly--working with the people to come up with new and innovative solutions to old problems.**