**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: Adam Corona

Ward: 26th

Occupation:Currently, 45th Ward Street and Sanitation Superintendent for Alderman John Arena.

Education: Political Science Degree (University of Mexico); Metropolitan Leadership Institute, Carpenter ApprenticeshipProgram

Previous political and civic experience: My involvement in Political campaigns has been extensive: President Obama, Alderman John Arena, JohnFritchey for Congressman, Gery Chico for Mayor (political campaign organizer), Alderman Scott Waguespack, Jesse Granato and Alderman JoAnn Thompson

**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 think we need to figure out a form of revenue that keeps our system solvent and a restructuring, but one that does not include reducing benefits. I believe it is a disservice to our public workers after years of dedicated work to fall short in our commitment. Retirees, are already seeing substantial monthly increments in their health insurance, with the possibility of “no cost of living” increments in the upcoming years.

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 think raising taxes should be the last alternative, but this difficult and unpopular decision may be one we need to make, if we are unable to find long term revenue generating solutions.

**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?

La Salle Tax, Gaming Industry Tax, Luxury Tax, Commuter Tax.

Additional property tax increases would be my last alternative to balance the unfunded pensions.

**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: No

\* 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. I think the LaSalle Street Tax proposal is a clear and viable option for how to alleviate our budget crisis. Given the plan proposed this tax would generate upwards of 10 billion for our state and 1/5 of that for our city. Having researched the details, I do not believe this is a big tax burden for those that buy and trade within our Chicago markets and yet the potential benefits for the city and state are huge.

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain: We cannot continue spending hundreds of millions of dollars in overtime, as we have done in the past two years, without any positive results. I do not believe that a Police Officer coming home from an 8 hour shift, heading to work (VRI) as his second job, will perform to their full capacity. We must adequately staff the police department by hiring more officers. We can also have fewer officers relegated to desks and administrative work and re-assigned back to the streets.

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

Stiffer penalties to straw purchasers that do not comply with the law.

**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 support and have actively canvassed for an Elected Representative School Board. I believe the best interests for our children lie in a school board that is reflective of the students it is serving, independent of the current Chicago administration. It is a conflict of interest to be appointed, as it brings into question whose needs will ultimately be serviced.

**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?

More transparency, accountability and the hiring of independent auditors to perform random audits.

City residents are entitled to know how their monies are being spent.

**7) Neighborhood economic development**

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

I support using the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) as this can provide financial assistance for small businesses on improvement cost. Reaching out to financial institutions (banks) and encouraging them to invest in our community. Building a strong and well structured Chamber of Commerce to attract more businesses into the 26th Ward.

**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 think the council size now, 50, is adequate because of their involvement in directing day to day city operations. If we reduce the city council, we expand ward responsibility and ultimately this becomes less cost effective, as we will likely need to hire other staff to help direct these day to day efforts. In the end, it will cost more due to employee salaries, retirement plans and other benefits.

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: Yes

Please explain: The gaming industry has potential to create increased revenue in our city. The caveat is that there needs to be a plan that regulates and provides for oversight.

**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: Yes, the city has more than enough cameras.

Please explain: The justification for cameras were to reduce accidents, however, preliminary data shows that this is not the case and in fact may increase accidents. It seems as though this was a veiled attempt at ultimately increasing city revenue, not increasing pedestrian and driver safety.

**11) Ward issues**

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

Working with law enforcement to abate high crime and keep the 26th ward safe; improving constituent services; working with schools and families to revitalize our schools and to prevent any more closings.