**2015 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: Dianne Daleiden

Ward: 40th

Occupation: Teacher

Education: Masters in Education, DePaul University. B.A. in Social Work, California State University.

**Previous political and civic experience:** I moved to the 40th Ward 30 years ago, raised my son (now a Chicago attorney) and I have been active in civic life as a volunteer with my neighborhood organization, W.A.N.T. (West Andersonville Neighbors Together), in my church, St. Gregory’s and other ward-level groups (Edgewater Historical Society and W.E.A.R.). I have volunteered on youth after-school programs, helped establish and manage our farmer’s market, served on various church committees including financial oversight and fundraising, and am an active Chicago Teachers Union member as well. I was raised in unincorporated Cook County. I have not previously held an elected office.

**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: Pension obligations need to be paid in full and maintained. New revenue streams such as commuter tax and a financial transaction tax on LaSalle Street transactions need to be explored and debated openly.

**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?**

Property taxes would force the workers who have already paid their fair share into the pension to pay more for their own benefits. New revenue streams need to be explored. Corporation tax deals and loopholes should be closed to avoid taxing working families even more. Nearly 50% of Illinois corporations pay no taxes at all. Nationally corporations foot only 7% of our nation’s tax bill down from 30% 50 years ago. It is time corporations pay their fair share.

**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?

This is a budget priority problem and not a funding problem. Teacher pensions have been misappropriated by the Mayoral-appointed Board of Education and City Hall. Keeping our contract with all workers is imperative to maintaining a middle class in Chicago.

Progressive revenue streams that do not tax teachers and other working families need to be explored.

**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: It depends on what those consumer services are but overall I prefer progressive taxes over regressive ones such as a sales tax.

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

Yes or No: YES – a commuter tax needs to be fully debated. It is a viable option.

\* 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.

As previously stated, we need to find new sources of revenue and not return to the same workers and property owners who have consistantly paid their share through sales and property taxes. Illinois should join the 40-plus states who have a graduated state income tax, where, if you make more, you pay more. A flat tax is inherently unfair.

**4) Crime**

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

Yes or No: YES

Please explain:

We need a fully funded, fully-staffed, community-based police force in all city neighborhoods to address local issues as well as participate in city-wide anti-crime programs.

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

I honestly do not know what is currently being proposed in Springfield but I do support stringent gun control laws.

**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:

First, we need the wisdom of educators, parents, students and academics to guide us on improving our schools. That is vital. As it now stands, and has since 1995, business interests are calling all the shots and they largely do not understand the mission of public schools: teaching and learning. Finally, voters need to be able to hold local officials accountable for the all school-related decisions by electing the Board of Education. I am proud that my campaign collected hundreds of signatures to place this question on the 40th Ward’s ballot.

**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, it’s a start.

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

Ultimately, I would like the TIF program to end if it can’t be made transparent and accountable to Chicago residents. We deserve a full accounting of why the taxes we tacitly agree to pay for schools, parks and libraries that improve our quality of life are diverted to profit-making corporations via TIF deals. TIF recipients must create long-lasting, good-paying jobs by providing goods and services residents want. If we can’t do that, then the money should stay with our schools, parks and libraries.

**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 TIFs to support small businesses and hold recipients accountable for creating long-term, living wage jobs and ensure that no self-dealing occurs. I would fight to hold the line on property taxes that make it extremely difficult for a small business to remain open. Finally, I would fight for increased funding for basic infrastructure – speedy road and sidewalk repair, minimal metered parking, restoration of the rat abatement, tree trimming and replacement budget. These are the city services that make businesses more accessible and attractive to customers. In addition, small business owners, just like working families, are being feed and fined to death. We all need a simple, straightforward tax system.

**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’m not going to pick a number out of my hat but I will say that if Ward consolidation would increase the quality of services and decrease the costs, as a City we should conduct a serious study and vet how some other cities make do with fewer council members. More important is how the City Council conducts its business. All government bodies should have watchdog but the City Council does not. My opponent pushed through a last minute ordinance to strip the Legislative Inspector General of his powers and give the job to the Board of Ethics Committee which has never found any wrongdoing in 25 years. That isn’t good government. What could be good government is making the Independent Budget Office happen so that aldermen have an independent review of all proposed legislation and a reasonable amount of time in which to make informed decisions about how they spend our money.

**9) A Chicago casino**

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

Yes or No: NO.

Please explain: The risk of harm to our society is too high.

**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: NO.

Please explain: Both programs are prime examples of why I am staunchly against privatizing our city’s revenue sources. The bribery involved in awarding the red light contract and shortening the length of yellow lights to dole out more tickets simply to boost profits increases Chicagoans’ cynicism about civic life. What we need is more fairness in our society. Basic fairness.

**11) Ward issues**

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

- **Edgewater Medical Center** has been standing empty and decaying for 13 years. It was declared a public hazard. All the near-by neighbors wanted was to allow their children to play safely outdoors and to protect their investment in their homes. That is not a lot to ask.

- **Jet Noise** - Due to the O’Hare Modernization Plan passed over 10 years ago, our ward now suffers the noise and pollution of 70% of all incoming flights to O’Hare. 70%. My opponent voted in support of that measure without an impact study on how it would affect his ward residents’ quality of life and housing values. That vote was callous and irresponsible.

- **Revitalizing the Lincoln Avenue corridor** north of Lawrence is one of my top priorities. Neighborhoods need commerce to thrive, not more condominiums. I will cooperate and invigorate entrepreneurs to open family-run, community-based businesses and services our residents want – restaurants, the arts, grocery stores, green spaces, boutiques, office space – that will make Lincoln Avenue come alive again. I am committed to helping the residents of Lincoln Bend build a community they can be proud of.