

# IVI-IPO 2015 CHICAGO ALDERMANIC QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION 1

DATE December 21, 2014 WARD 29<sup>th</sup> Ward

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER Thomas Simmons

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED Approx 2800 NUMBER REQUIRED 473

*Please provide the following background information:*

A. Elective or appointive public and/or party offices previously held including dates. **None held.**

B. Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate. **None.**

C. What is your primary occupation? **Chicago police officer and attorney.**

D. Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years. **Consistent volunteer and financial contributor for HOPE Worldwide, Executive Board of the Northwest Side Community Coalition, 36<sup>th</sup> Ward Law Day Panelist, Galewood Farmer's Market co-organizer.**

E. What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek? **I believe my Juris Doctor and B.A. in Criminal/Social Justice would greatly assist me in the office I am seeking.**

F. What candidates have you supported in past elections? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign. **Cook County Commissioner Richard Boykin, assisted in phone banking.**

G. Please list all endorsements you have received so far. **Water Reclamation Commissioner, Hon. Barbara McGowan, Cook County Commissioner Richard Boykin, Rev. Ira Acree, Rev. Marshall Hatch, Rev. Tasha Brown, and the 29<sup>th</sup> Ward Aldermanic Candidate Coalition Selection Committee (The 29<sup>th</sup> Ward Aldermanic Candidates Coalition Selection Committee consist of community leaders, political activist, 5 past aldermanic candidates, Danny K. Davis, Richard Boykin, Barbara McGowan and significant others who came together to vet all potential candidates and identify one individual among the candidates who exhibited the character, experience, ability and professionalism to best serve and represent the interest of the people of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ward.)**

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H. As concisely as possible, state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally? **I am a strong advocate for my community and proven leader. I have spent the entirety of my adult life fighting for and serving our nation and communities as a United States Marine, Cook County Deputy Sheriff, Chicago Police Officer and attorney. I have a proven and decorated record of public service and fully understand the legislative requirements of the officer I am seeking. Amongst others, I intend to concentrate much effort in improving the quality of life for the residents of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ward by implementing programs and goals to reduce crime. By doing so, the Ward will experience a renewed and revitalized interest as stakeholders of the Ward, which will serve to improve community development and economic growth within the Ward. I will focus on creating jobs within the Ward and promoting educational opportunities within the Ward. Lastly, and perhaps most important, is to restore the confidence and trust of the community.**

I. What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date?

**Campaign Budget = \$150,000**

**Projective Revenue = \$100,000**

**In-kind Contributions = \$50,000**

**There are no paid leadership positions. All leadership positions are in-kind contribution. \$6,000 has been raised to-date. \$16,000 has been donated to the campaign from my personal account. \$30,000 has been pledged from special donors involved in my campaign. Additional funds will come through proven successful fundraising ability by myself and members of my finance committee**

J. How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list? **My campaign staff consists of 14 people. The current infrastructure consist of two campaign offices, campaign chairman, treasurer, strategists, media/marketing, press secretary, policy/issue/research coordinator, scheduler, church coordinator, women's committee, field director, minister's committee, voter file database, office managers, volunteer coordinator, block club coordinator, phone bank coordinator, social media coordinator, direct mail and field visibility programs. I currently have 50 active volunteers**

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*Most questions on this questionnaire can be answered by checking either YES or NO. Others are essay questions and all have the option of answering in greater detail. Just hit enter at the end of the question and begin typing your answer in the additional space.*

### CITY COUNCIL REFORM AND ETHICS

	YES	NO	
1.			Do you favor maintaining the current number of City Council committees? <b>(I specifically reserve my response until I can fully assess each committee, its role and manner in which it may possibly be incorporated into another to save spending)</b>
	ESSAY		Which committees, if any, would you combine or eliminate?
2.	ESSAY		What reforms are necessary in the City Council's committee rules and structure?
3.	X		Would you give the Inspector General's office independent subpoena power or other compulsory process that can be directed against city officials, agencies and employees without necessitation the approval of the Mayor or Corporation Counsel?
4.	X		Should the Inspector General be able to initiate his or her own investigations of Aldermen without a complaint from outside the office?
5.	X		Should the Inspector General be able to pursue anonymous complaints? <b>(However, only if the complaint is egregious in nature or rises to the level of criminal activity)</b>
6.		X	Do you support patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?
7.		X	Will you employ or have you employed staff, in your office who hold other public sector jobs concurrently?
8.		X	Will you employ or have you employed staff, in your office who have either outside employment or contracts with entities which do business with the City?
9.		X	Will you vote for an ordinance mandating that the City contest unemployment claims by former employees who were fired for cause?
10.	X		Will you vote for an ordinance forbidding the City to hire or contract the services of anyone previously fired for cause from the City or any other unit of government?
11.		X	Will you support an ordinance to reduce the number of wards?
12.			Have you joined or will you join:
		X	The Paul Douglas Caucus
	X		The Independent Progressive Caucus
			Both
13.	X		Do you support changing the state statute to return to filling aldermanic vacancies by special election, rather than Mayoral appointment?
14.	X		Will you vote for an ordinance requiring redistricting of the wards to be based on non-partisan criteria and not to benefit any specific individual or political party?
15.		X	Will you or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers or employees?
16.		X	Will you or have you accepted campaign donations from people or businesses seeking zoning changes in your ward?
		X	Do you support public financing of municipal campaigns?
17.	ESSAY		Please explain your position. <b>Public financing of municipal campaigns would allow a viable candidate without the necessary financial backing or resources to have an ability to run a competitive race without having to be indebted to special interest groups. It fosters and encourages a democratic process, voter participation and ensures liberties long fought for.</b>
18.	ESSAY		Who are your top 5 contributors and how much has each contributed to your campaign? <b>Steven</b>

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		<b>M. Bylina III (\$2,000), Cynthia White (\$1,000)</b>	
19.		What changes would you support to the redistricting process? <b>I would support a completely independent assessment based upon a geographical community areas and specifically eliminate the politics of ensuring an incumbent remains in office by redistricting the wards to benefit his/her voter base.</b>	
<b>REVENUE AND BUDGET</b>			
20.	X	Will you vote to hire independent analysts to conduct a forensic audit of past City spending?	
Will you vote for a budget ordinance which would require:			
21.	X	public questioning of city department heads concerning their departments' specific budget requests?	
22.	X	making budget copies available to the public 30 days in advance of hearings?	
23.	X	restoring city-wide community group budget hearings several months prior to the publication of the budget, as were held under the Washington and Sawyer administrations?	
24.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What additional revenue sources, if any, would you propose? <b>I would propose increases in some fines imposed by law enforcement, a tax on trading at the CBOT and Mercantile Exchange (Not per share traded basis but per trade basis), and a reduction in unnecessary spending.</b>
25.			Do you support casino gambling for Chicago? <b>Although there are numerous outlying casinos, I support further exploration of the pros and cons of a Chicago based casino prior to my full support of gambling for Chicago.</b>
26.	X		Will you vote to require a citywide referendum before any gambling is instituted in the City?
27.		X	Will you vote to roll back Mayoral and Aldermanic salaries to pre-2007 levels?
28.	X		Will you vote for an ordinance limiting future Mayoral and Aldermanic salary increases to the same percentage as the lowest raise for any class of city employees?
29.	X		Do you agree with the criticism that City government is top heavy with management?
	<b>ESSAY</b>		Please explain your position. <b>For years, Chicago has been served by a Commissioners, several Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Assistants to the Commissioner within a single Department. The titles and responsibilities are duplicative.</b>
30.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures will you vote for to reform the city pension plan and ensure its solvency? <b>I am supportive of the creation of new revenue and a reduction in unnecessary spending. The proposed reform is unconstitutional in that it diminished the value of the public employee benefits and healthcare.</b>
31.	<b>ESSAY</b>		How would you modify (if at all) the benefit and contribution levels and eligibility requirements for public employee pensions? <b>I support legislation that would establish annual caps on benefits at \$125,000 for new hires. I support a dedicated revenue stream to the municipal pension along with a reduction for new employees on a prospective basis. We cannot financially sustain the current level of benefits and we must reduce them without affecting retirees or current employees. I oppose reducing current benefit, including health benefits for retirees and existing employees.</b>
32.	<b>Choose One</b>		Should discretionary funds for ward services and infrastructure improvements be allocated
			in equal amounts to each ward
		X	based on the size of each ward
			based on the needs of each ward
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	
33.	X		Will you institute participatory budgeting to allow ward residents to vote on discretionary spending in your ward?

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PRIVATIZATION		
34.	ESSAY	Which city services or assets, if any, do you believe should be privatized and what is your criteria? <b>I would seek a moratorium on the sell/privatization of city assets (i.e. parking meters, airports, skyway, etc.)</b>
35.	X	Will you vote for an ordinance requiring an independent analysis of any lease or outsourcing arrangement?
36.	X	Will you vote for an ordinance requiring detailed analysis and evaluation of any lease or outsourcing arrangement at least 30 days prior to the City Council vote?
37.	ESSAY	Before voting on privatization contracts, what will you do to ensure that they deliver the maximum return and best service for city residents in the long term? <b>I would seek a moratorium on the sell/privatization of city assets (i.e. parking meters, airports, skyway, etc.)</b>
38.	ESSAY	What procedures will you implement to ensure that privatization arrangements are not being used to move patronage workers outside of the scope of the Rutan decision requirements or any other anti-patronage rules or protocols? <b>I would seek a moratorium on the sell/privatization of city assets (i.e. parking meters, airports, skyway, etc.)</b>
PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
39.	ESSAY	How will you involve ward residents in planning? <b>I would form voluntary committees that would address all aspects of ward development. These committees and sub committees would vote on the planning and economic development of the Ward.</b>
40.	ESSAY	What is your long-range plan for development of the ward? <b>From an economic view, I will give the financial attention and assistance to the viable business already serving the community. Their continued thriving is important to the continued success of the Ward. Further the main thoroughfares of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ward will be developed with businesses that will serve and become a part of the community, creating jobs and economic growth within the community. From a community development view, I will provide the necessary programs to assist and educate homeowners with the tools to successfully maintain a mortgage and defend against foreclosure. I will make every effort to find funding for the rehabilitation of foreclose properties and put community residents in those properties with the assistance of down payment programs with the city.</b>
41.	ESSAY	What criteria do you or will you use in determining whether or not to grant a zoning change or variance? <b>Any request for zoning change and variances with be vetted by a committee of volunteers from the Ward. Any change or variance that would support the overall economic and community development growth of the ward will be encourage.</b>
42.	ESSAY	How will you involve residents in planning, approval, and oversight of TIF districts? <b>I would hold regular meeting to discuss TIF projects and form a TIF advisory board that would promote transparency, awareness and community involvement.</b>
43.	X	Will you vote to terminate a TIF if the objectives of the TIF plan have been accomplished before the 23 year period is ended?
44.	X	Will you vote to return unspent and uncommitted TIF funds on an annual basis to the various taxing bodies?
45.	ESSAY	How do you propose to replace property tax revenue for CPS and other taxing bodies that is lost to TIF development? <b>I would propose to create new revenue, reduce spending redirect all surplus TIF back to the CPS and other taxing bodies.</b>
46.	X	Will you support a moratorium on creation of any new TIF districts until new funding sources are identified to replace the revenue diverted to the TIF?
47.	X	Will you vote for an ordinance requiring that large corporate entities receiving \$250,000 or more in public subsidies, and their tenants, must pay their workers a living wage (currently \$11/hour)?

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48.	X		Will you vote to invest substantially more in job-training and the creation of transitional job programs in disadvantaged communities, including the formerly incarcerated, homeless, youth, and non-English speakers?
<b>HOUSING</b>			
49.	X		Will you vote to amend the Vacant Properties Ordinance to require mortgage servicers to register their properties?
50.	X		Do you support enacting an ordinance to preserve Single-Room Occupancy housing?
51.	X		Will you vote for an inclusionary zoning ordinance requiring developers to set aside 30% of residential new construction or renovation for the creation of affordable housing?
52.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures will you support to guarantee that some of the foreclosed properties saved through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program are made affordable to families at 40% and 60% of AMI?
53.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What procedures and safeguards would you put in place on conversion/demolition of SRO's and other low income housing to ensure that affordable housing will continue to be available for low income tenants who would otherwise be displaced? <b>I would require that before any demolition of SRO housing is done, that there be assistance with receiving affordable housing for residents of the proposed dwelling</b>
54.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures will you support to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable family sized units available to families in the Section 8 program?
55.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures will you support to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals and families who are not served by any existing programs?
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Do you support any of the following to be built in your ward?
56.		X	low income rental housing that is affordable to those at 15% to 30% of AMI?
57.		X	supportive housing for people overcoming addiction and other problems which contribute to homelessness?
58.	X		shelters for the homeless?
59.	X		Do you favor a moratorium on the conversion or demolition of SRO's pending the development of protections and remedies to protect the displaced tenants from becoming homeless?
60.		X	Do you support allowing the demolition of existing public housing units without new or rehabilitated replacement housing on a one-for-one basis?
61.	<b>Choose One</b>		Which standard should the City use to define affordable housing?
			AMI of the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area
			AMI of Cook County
	X		AMI of Chicago
			AMI of the Community Area
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
62.	<b>Choose One</b>		Which of the following options for choosing the School Board do you support?
	X		Popular Election
			Mayoral appointment from nominations made by community representatives
			Maintaining the current system of Mayoral appointment
			A mix of elected and appointed members
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	
63.	X		Will you support a city-wide lottery for enrollment in magnet schools?
64.	X		Will you support LSCs in maintaining full powers, and support them through adequate funding levels that provide training and support for LSCs to do their jobs?

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65.	X		Will you support a moratorium on school closings until a detailed analysis of the impacts of shuffling children is completed, and a real plan to address the quality of education and safety for every child is in place?
66.	X		Will you support development and implementation of a more comprehensive and accurate approach to evaluate student and teacher performance than reliance on the SAT and ACT tests?
67.		X	Would you favor repealing (or modifying) the 70% requirement for voting to authorize teacher strikes?
68.	ESSAY		What is your assessment of Renaissance 2010 and its implementation in your ward as well as the City as a whole? Please include in your assessment the role of charter schools as well as the power to reconstitute schools. <b>Renaissance 2010 was in fact not as successful as initially expected. It is widely accepted that the increase in educational performance not achieved and it led to an increase in violence when closures and displacements occurred.</b>
69.	ESSAY		What should the City do to improve the quality of all local schools? <b>The City must ensure that the schools are properly resourced and equitably funded.</b> Further, I support the school board being an elected body and the CEO or Superintendent should have a strong background as an educator.
70.	ESSAY		What are your plans to improve the local schools in your ward? <b>I support smaller classroom sizes. Research shows that children are more productive in smaller size classrooms. Enforcing class size limits enhances the teacher's opportunity to reach a greater number of students, as well as, delivering a more quality education.</b>
71.	ESSAY		How would you modify (if at all) the benefit and contribution levels and eligibility requirements for public school teacher pension? <b>I support legislation that would establish annual caps on benefits at \$125,000 for new hires. I support a dedicated revenue stream to the municipal pension along with a reduction for new employees on a prospective basis. We cannot financially sustain the current level of benefits and we must reduce them without affecting retirees or current employees. I oppose reducing current benefit, including health benefits for retirees and existing employees.</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>			
72.	X		Will you vote for the Clean Power Ordinance?
73.		X	Will you vote to privatize Chicago's water delivery system?
74.	X		Will you vote to ban Styrofoam food containers in Chicago public schools?
75.	X		Will you vote to ban Styrofoam food containers in Chicago restaurants and food delivery services?
76.	X		Will you vote to adopt the water quality standards recommended by the Pollution Control Board?
77.	ESSAY		What should the City do to encourage and implement alternative forms of energy? <b>Chicago has been committed to using alternative forms of energy through its partnership with ComEd and should continue in its efforts.</b>
78.	ESSAY		What other environmental initiatives, if any, do you propose?
<b>PARKS</b>			
79.		X	Do you support election of the Chicago Park District Board?
80.		X	Do you support increased privatization of park facilities and services?
	ESSAY		Why or why not? <b>The Park District and its services are another asset of the city that, if managed property from within, can be profitable for the City. Although there has been some success of privatization of some park services, proper leadership within the City to control the asset and make it profitable could have been realized as well.</b>
81.	X		Do you support prioritization of land acquisition and capital improvements first to those

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			neighborhoods which are underserved by existing facilities?
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
82.		X	Will you vote to increase the City subsidy to the CTA?
83.	<b>Rank 1-5 or say no to any</b>		Please indicate which CTA expansion plans, if any, you support and rank them in order of priority (1 highest)
	1		Red Line south to 130th Street
	4		Orange Line to Ford City Mall
	3		Downtown Circulator
	2		Downtown-O'Hare Express
			Other – please specify
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	
84.		X	Do you support renegotiation of Chicago's parking meter privatization deal?
85.		X	Do you support privatization of Midway Airport?
86.	X		Do you support the O'Hare expansion plan?
<b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE</b>			
87.	X		Is 911 response time adequate?
	<b>ESSAY</b>		If not, how can it be improved?
88.		X	Are there inequities in 911 service in your ward?
	<b>ESSAY</b>		If so, what can be done to redress them?
89.	X		Do you support re-allocating police services from low-crime to high-crime neighborhoods?
90.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What changes, if any, would you suggest for the CAPS program? <b>CAPS has been reduced and inadequately funded since its initial inception. As a result, there has been an increase in mistrust in the police department by the community and a lack community involvement from the levels previously experienced. I would begin by refunding the program to assist in the reduction of crime.</b>
91.	X		Will you vote for more funding for alternative crime prevention programs such as Cease Fire?
92.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures will you support to stop the schools to prison pipeline? <b>I would ensure that there are educational programs that will provide our youth with quality job training at skilled professions available to them at an early age and have placement and jobs available to them through union and apprenticeship programs.</b>
93.	X		Do you support gun control?
94.	<b>ESSAY</b>		What measures, if any, should the City Council adopt in response to recent court decisions striking down Chicago's handgun ban?
95.	X		Will you vote to order the City to stop paying legal fees and attempt to recover past legal costs of city employees implicated in the Police Board findings of misconduct related to the Burge case? <b>For those found guilty or pled guilty, if any, of misconduct associated with the Burge Case.</b>
96.	<b>ESSAY</b>		Please share your views regarding the functioning of the Independent Police Review Authority and whether it should operate more independently of the Police Department. <b>IPRA has in the past and currently operates independent of the Police Department. IPRA's investigations, findings and recommended discipline is independent, although the Superintendent may disagree with the firing of a police officer. However, the Superintendent does not make the final decision.</b>
<b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b>			
97.	X		Do you support affirmative action based on race, gender and sexual orientation in establishing



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			criteria for hiring and promoting public employees?
98.	X		Do you support affirmative action as a criteria in letting city contracts?
99.	ESSAY		Please comment on current participation of individuals with disabilities in city hiring and contracts. <b>The City should ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately represented in City hiring and contracts and that there are nondiscriminatory measures in place to ensure EEOC practices and enforced.</b>
100.	ESSAY		Please comment on current women and minority participation in city hiring and contracts. Be sure your comments include firefighter and police officer recruitment and promotion. <b>The City should ensure that women, as well as minorities, are adequately represented in City hiring and contracts. It is widely known that women and minorities are underrepresented on the police and fire departments, particularly in the supervisory ranks. I would support initiatives that would give preference in the hiring process such as those given to veterans through veterans preference points.</b>
101.	X		Do you favor restructuring the wage scale of city employees to institute gender-equal pay for jobs of comparable worth?
102.	X		Will you vote to require all City vendors and contractors to provide spousal benefits for same-sex partners of their employees?
103.		X	Will you vote for the Municipal ID ordinance?
	ESSAY		Why or why not?
<b>ALDERMANIC PRIORITIES</b>			
104.	ESSAY		What employment, if any, other than alderman, do you intend to hold? <b>I intend to continue my practice as an attorney, although from a management position.</b>
105.	ESSAY		How will you divide your time between your aldermanic duties and your other occupation? <b>Being the alderman of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ward will be by full-time commitment. I will transfer from the day-to-day managerial and operational demands of my law firm and transition into a more management role.</b>
106.	ESSAY		Please specify the minimum hours per week you will spend performing your aldermanic duties. <b>A minimum of 45 hours weekly.</b>
107.	ESSAY		Please describe your service office staffing plan, including the number of staff, full and part time, how you will pay for them, and the number of hours per week that your service office will be open. <b>I will have a staff of 3 full-time employee that will be paid from the budget provided each alderman for staff. I will also hire part-time staff as needed that will be paid from the Aldermanic expense allotment. As Alderman, my service office would be open Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 5:00pm and Saturday 9:00am – Noon.</b>
108.	ESSAY		What services need improvement in your ward? How will you achieve this? <b>Throughout the Wards, city services needs improvements. I would ensure that the proper Departments providing the various sources are adequately staffed and resourced financially.</b>
109.	ESSAY		What are your top priorities for the Ward? <b>Reduction in crime, community development, economic development, job creations, educational advancements and city services improvements.</b>
110.	ESSAY		How will you work with community groups and residents on City matters? <b>Community groups and residents will be the essence of my being Alderman. I will keep in constant contact and provide a bridge where the groups can work together to better the Ward. I would have a committee of community group leaders that will serve to inform the community of Ward matters and solicit feedback and solutions to problems experienced throughout the ward.</b>

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