

IVI-IPO 2012 WARD COMMITTEEMAN QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE _____ WARD: 45 PARTY: Democrat

NAME: John Arena

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: TBD

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 1337 NUMBER REQUIRED: 537

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates. **45th Ward Alderman, elected 2011**

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

C) What is your primary occupation? **City of Chicago Alderman**

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years. **I have sat on the Board of Directors of the Portage Park Neighborhood Association for the last ten years, including holding the post of Vice President and the Director of Communications.**

I have also been active with the Six Corners Association for the past five years: active committee member on the Economic Restructuring and the Promotion Committees.

I have been a Wells Park Little League coach for the past 6 years, an active participant in 16th District CAPS, member of Friends of Portage Park and Friends of Dickinson Park.

E) What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek? **As a student at Northern Illinois, I majored in Visual Communications and Electronic Media. I worked as production manager of the Northern Star newspaper during my college years.**

My experience as an alderman and active member of the community will be the most instructive in the position of ward committeeman. Through my work in the community and my conversations with constituents, I have gained a deeper understanding for why voters feel a sense of apathy and have already begun implementing programs that increase voter engagement and greater participation in governing by citizens.

F) What candidates have you supported? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign. **Most of my recent political involvement has been through Northside DFA. I have helped local candidates like Daniel Biss, James Cappleman, and Joe Laiacona. I have also supported Ricardo Munoz in his campaign for Clerk of the Circuit Court and Aurelia Pucinski for Supreme Court Justice**

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far. I have been endorsed by Northside DFA. I have also received support in this race AFSCME Council 31, SEIU Healthcare, Bricklayers, Construction and General Laborers District Council of Chicago, IBEW Local 9, and the Jefferson Park Chamber of Commerce.

H) As concisely as possible, please 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 the candidate with the deepest roots in the community, as shown by my long history of community engagement.

Open and accessible government is my most important goal. As Alderman, my ward office has ushered in a new level of responsiveness and engagement for the 45th Ward. I will bring that same level of service and community involvement to the position of Democratic Committeeman.

I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date? We have a budget of \$40,000 and have raised \$20,000.

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list? Staff of 2. We had more than 100 active volunteers in the aldermanic campaign and many of them have committed to helping with this race as well. In collecting signatures we engaged 50 volunteers with 26 playing a meaningful roll in the effort.

IVI-IPO 2012 WARD COMMITTEEMAN QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2

1. Should the present signature requirement for a Committeeman's nominating petition be changed?
If so, how? **I think that the present requirements are acceptable in that they require a candidate to get enough signatures to demonstrate community support but aren't so high as to be prohibitive to candidates who aren't well-funded or haven't yet built a strong organization.**
2. Should there be a law (like that for replacing an alderman, etc.) for replacing a ward or township Committeeman who leaves office during her/his term? **I think the Party should determine its own governing rules in this matter. As the current Cook County Democratic Party By-laws read, and in light of the sort of organization I intend to establish, the members of my ward organization who share my vision for a progressive, engaged 45th Ward Democratic Party, would be able to appoint a successor should the need arise and know that they will continue to have a voice in the direction of the Democratic Party.**
3. What are your views on slating, the selection of candidates by the party or party committees prior to a primary or non-partisan elections? If you are opposed to slating, will you participate in slating sessions? **I do not think that the party should slate in primary elections and would rather that the party maintain a focus on electing the Democratic nominee in any given general election. That said, I will likely participate in the slating process unless and until such process is changed. To not do participate would deprive my constituents of their voice in the operations of the Democratic Party. I think the party should only get involved in non-partisan elections when it is clear that one candidate represents the ideals of, and has been an active member in, the Democratic Party while the opponent has demonstrated a commitment to the Republican Party and its ideals. This can be determined through vetting the candidates stated positions and primary voting record.**

4. Should the party finance the campaigns of selected candidates in contested primary elections or non-partisan elections (such as aldermanic elections)? **My position on financing primaries and non-partisan elections mirrors my position on slating – don't fund in primaries and only fund in non-partisan elections where it is very clear that one candidate represents the Democratic Party's principles and the other is in direct conflict with those principles.**
5. Does a committeeman have a responsibility to support the party's candidates after they have been selected in a primary election? **No. Though I think that I would do so more often than not, if I believe that my party has made a mistake in endorsing a particular candidate, I will not lend my support or endorsement to said candidate.**
6. Do you feel it is appropriate for elected officials to hold a party office? Please explain your position. **Yes. I think that it is vital that party leaders understand not just the ideals of the party they belong to, but also the needs of the community they are chosen to represent. As an alderman, I talk to members of the community of all political stripes on a daily basis and understand fundamentally what the community needs and is looking for from its leaders. In that way, being an elected official would allow me to be a better party leader.**
7. Have you or would you send letters to government officials soliciting jobs or promotions for individuals? **No**
8. Have you formed or would you form a ward-wide organization? Discuss structure, meetings, membership, staff and budget. **By establishing a truly open and accountable ward office, I immediately set a new standard for accessibility, both personal and through staff, that citizens have with municipal government. By setting this standard, I have redefined the relationship between an elected official and the citizens. I will have similar standards of accessibility and accountability as ward committeeman.**
- As committeeman, I will establish a committee structure with a membership-elected president and six member board with appointments split between Committeeman and President. Qualifications: Membership: pulled democratic ballot in at least two of the last four primary cycles, Board Member: pulled Democratic ballot in at least 3 of the last four primary cycles.**
- Another specific way I will open the political process to the voters is to host candidate meet and greets and forums. Voters will have a chance BEFORE slating is set to interview candidates and make recommendations to the board.**
- The 45th Ward has historically maintained a higher-than-average (45%-50%, >14,000 in 2011 municipal primary, >12,000 in runoff) voter turnout when compared to registered voters. Yet the eligible voting population is underrepresented at the ballot box simply because they are not registered. I will set a goal of at least 5% increase in registration each year I hold the office.**
9. How do you propose to finance your ward operations? **After being elected as Committeeman, I will form the 45th Ward Independent Democrats and will host regular fundraisers inviting neighbors and businesses in the ward to help me build a strong, progressive Democratic Party in the ward.**
10. What plans do you have to enhance voter registration and voter turn out in your ward? **I won my runoff election by 30 votes against a conservative Republican. I will use my race as an example of how important it is for voters to exercise their rights and how necessary it is for progressive Democrats to not sit back and assume that they will easily triumph over**

a conservative candidate. We will establish an ongoing campaign to register and educate voters about how to evaluate candidates objectively and become a voice to their community during elections.

11. Does your organization have/or will have members? If so how does one become a member? **I will follow the DFA membership model. You must attend more than half of the meetings in any given calendar year and volunteer for at least 3 functions per year. Donations to democratic candidates will be counted on a weighted scale to discourage “buying” membership.**
12. Should members of a ward organization have a role in determining endorsements? **I will consult with members of the ward organization on all things pertaining to my role as committeeman, including choices presented through the endorsement process.**
13. Does, or will, your ward organization communicate openly with residents and activists? Will you have a website to convey current information and volunteer opportunities? **Yes. Much like I do in my role as Alderman, I will place a premium on communication – both on updating residents as to what we are doing and seeking input from residents and businesses as to their ideas for building a better 45th Ward.**
14. What idea do you have to finding and retaining high quality election judges? **We have already been doing a great job of increasing community involvement, and I fully expect that we will be able to identify ample numbers of 45th Ward voters qualified and willing to serve as election judges.**
15. What strategies will you employ to engage the residents in you ward and increase voter participation with emphasis on how you will attract younger voters? **I think much of what we have been doing currently – from the Arts Alive program to community bike rides – has served to engaged residents of the 45th Ward in ways that hasn’t been done previously in this area. I will continue and enhance those efforts both in my role as Alderman and as Democratic Committeeman.**
16. What should be done to include voters in the decision making process for replacing candidates on the ballot and filling vacancies of elected officials? **Short of changing the election laws governing the way such matters are handled, it is incumbent upon elected committeeman to seek input from a cross-section of residents before entering into the appointment process so that the committeeman is, as nearly as possible, expressing the will of his or her constituents.**
17. Question for Incumbent: What have you done to involve more people in the political process? What further steps will you take?
18. Will you follow the Cook County judicial retention “vote Yes” campaign? **Yes. Though it is not a perfect system and no doubt results in some judges being retained who shouldn’t, I think the alternative of having sitting judges focused on political considerations throughout their term in anticipation of running for office and mounting a full re-election campaign is worse.**
19. **For Republicans:** What actions will you take to make the GOP more competitive in Cook County races?