

IVI-IPO 2012 WARD COMMITTEEMAN QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE 12/16/2011 WARD: 49 PARTY: Democratic

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NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 1309 NUMBER REQUIRED: 426

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates.

Democratic Committeeman of the 49th Ward 1993 to Present

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

None

C) What is your primary occupation?

Chief Financial Officer, State of Illinois, Office of Health Information Technology

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years.

I have been committed and involved in many community activities serving as a member, board member, contributor or volunteer in countless projects, committees and organizations. I have been a member of the Leadership Committee of the wildly popular Participatory Budgeting process since its inception, am a member of the Rogers Park Business Alliance and a former member of their Board of Directors, am a voting member of the 49th Ward Zoning and Land Use Advisory Council, was an advisory board member of the Rogers Park Section 8 Tenants Council, served on the Howard St. C.T.A. station renovation committee, am a life member of the Friends of the Rogers Park Library, was a member of the Morse Ave. Redevelopment Task Force, was a member of Healthy Rogers Park and am a member of the Rogers Park Community Council. Additionally, I have attended CAPS meetings, crime walks, and anti-crime rallies throughout the ward and have participated in numerous activities bringing the community together to fight against crime, violence and injustice.

E) What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

B.A. Political Studies, M.P.A. Public Administration - Healthcare

F) What candidates have you supported? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign.

As a Democratic Ward Committeeman I have endorsed and supported 100's if not a 1,000 candidates for office. Some of the best are Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, President Toni Preckwinkle, Alderman Joe Moore, Dawn Clark Netsch, Tom Chiola, David Orr, Pat Quinn, Barack Obama, Sandra Otaka, Jesse White, Ricardo Munoz, Woody Bowman, Kelly Cassidy, Carol Mosley Braun and many others. Not all of them won and some didn't turn out as well as we hoped, but I have a very long and consistent record of supporting progressive candidates, female candidates and minority candidates.

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far.

Alderman Joe Moore, Cong. Jan Schakowsky, President Toni Preckwinkle, State Representative Kelly Cassidy. This process is just starting and I have had an opponent for less than two weeks.

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 have built and led the most open Democratic Party organization in Chicago. The endorsements from my organization are determined by a vote of the active members and that endorsement is the official endorsement of the 49th Ward Democratic Organization. That means that all printed and electronic materials carry those endorsements. Additionally, I host a monthly meeting and an occasional public meeting on issues of the day and with officeholders who represent our community. Finally, I am a solid and consistent vote for progressive candidates at Cook County Democratic Party Central Committee Meetings and have a strong ward organization that not only supports progressive candidates in my ward, but also have inspired the members of the organization to travel across the Midwest to other districts and states to help elect other progressive candidates. I have provided colleagues and members of other ward and township organizations with information and training related to adopting the model I have built and lead in the 49th Ward so that they could use the information to make change in their own ward organizations.

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

My campaign committee reports all of its donations and expenditures online on the Illinois State Board of Elections [website](#). I have always chosen to report my financial activity, even prior to the legal requirement was passed by the legislature. I will raise whatever is necessary to run a competitive campaign.

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list?

I have not hired a campaign staff as of yet. My volunteer list has more than 3,000 names on it, and somewhere between 300 and 500 people have been active over the past few years.

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?

The present number of signatures was approximately 2.5 times the number of signatures required for an Aldermanic candidate. The number of signatures could and should be lowered. I believe that the number should be the same as the number required for the Aldermanic candidates.

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 believe that in these difficult economic times having a special election, as prescribed for an Alderman is expensive and not essential. I fully believe that at if the vacancy occurs more than four months prior to the next regularly scheduled primary election that the remainder of a term should be voted on by the members of the ward who vote in the party primary.

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?**

The Democratic Party of the 49th Ward endorses candidates that have the support of more 66.6% of the voting members. If nobody receives 2/3 of the vote, it is referred for to the Board (made up of self-selecting volunteers, not elected or appointed) for further consideration. There has never been a case when somebody has gotten less than 55% of the vote receiving our endorsement.

At the County level, I have participated in slate-making sessions and have worked hard to get the Cook County Democratic Party to slate progressive candidates. Ultimately, I support who the members of the 49th Ward Democratic Party support and if that is at odds with the County slate, I always go with the members of our local organization.

4. **Should the party finance the campaigns of selected candidates in contested primary elections or non-partisan elections (such as aldermanic elections)?**

In my experience the Cook County Democratic Party campaigns are funded by donations from contributors and primarily from the candidates they are supporting making contributions, much the same way the Independent Campaign Committee funds its endorsed candidates. If it is the case, or becomes the case, that the slate is funded by large donations to the party then I think that party funding should be stopped. The party should not be a conduit to avoiding the campaign finance laws.

5. **Does a committeeman have a responsibility to support the party's candidates after they have been selected in a primary election?**

NO. A Ward Committeeman is an independently elected official. Generally, I am a progressive Democrat, but I have a history of supporting candidates that my organization endorses rather than the CCDP endorses both before and after the primary.

6. **Do you feel it is appropriate for elected officials to hold a party office? Please explain your position.**

I think that it is not unusual for an elected official to hold a party office to protect their incumbency. I have been a volunteer office holder and have never run for any other office. I think that party offices should not be held by government officials.

7. **Have you or would you send letters to government officials soliciting jobs or promotions for individuals?**

I strongly support laws that prohibit patronage. I would not send a letter with the hopes of placing a person into a position that is covered by these protections. I would support a candidate who is being asked to serve in an “exempt” position if I felt that they were qualified and capable of performing the duties the position requires. For example, if Joe Moore were asked to be the agency director for the Illinois EPA I would support his candidacy. I believe it is important to not only elect progressive leaders, but to place progressive administrators in policy making positions to further the progressive agenda I believe in.

8. **Have you formed or would you form a ward-wide organization? Discuss structure, meetings, membership, staff and budget.**

I currently have a strong ward-wide organization open to anyone who wishes to become involved and because of the structure and openness of the organization, have numerous individuals who live outside the ward who participate in the 49th Ward because of our meetings, are openness, and our political philosophy. Membership is based on a willingness to participate and being supportive of our activities. We have a Board, volunteers, and operate on a slim budget.

9. **How do you propose to finance your ward operations?**

Through fundraising from the community and the candidates we support.

10. **What plans do you have to enhance voter registration and voter turnout in your ward?**

Voter registration in the ward is a constant challenge because of the nature of the rental/owner mix, the high level of students in the ward and the generally higher than average turnover. We bring motor-voter cards to events, when petitioning and when we canvass. We also do voter registration drives and sometimes have voter registration contests to motivate our volunteers. We have also worked with the Alderman’s staff to have the office a place of registration and for the mobile office to have voter registration cards at all mobile service office events.

11. **Does your organization have/or will have members? If so how does one become a member?**

Membership is open to anyone who is a Democrat and would like to participate in our activities. Being a voting member (able to vote on endorsements) requires a member to provide 10 hours of time in support of the organization per year. Support is loosely defined and is determined by the Board.

12. **Should members of a ward organization have a role in determining endorsements?**

YES. They should and they do. In fact, the members, not the Committeeman, make the organizations endorsements.

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?**

Postal Service, E-mail and a website have been in place for many years now. Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare have become additional ways that communication has been enhanced in more recent years as well as a new website host that maximize social media connections.

14. **What idea do you have to finding and retaining high quality election judges?**

All Election Judges appointed by the Committeeman in the 49th Ward are required to come into the office to complete applications so that at least a brief encounter is had to assess communication and hygiene skills. After each election a meeting is held with the Area Chairs to determine where problems occurred with Election Judges and if there is a need for removal. That said, I have several thoughts about how to improve the Judges of both parties.

I believe that similar to the National Guard, public employers should set an example for all employers by paying persons willing to serve as Election Judges for the day. This could be in addition to payment made by the Board of Elections. Secondly, training should be more comprehensive and it should be mandatory. Thirdly, the Board of Elections should appoint more Election Officials to provide roving guidance and support on Election Day rather than responding to calls of “emergency” so to speak.

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?**

We produce flyers for every building in the ward reminding people that it is Election Day and post them several days before voting. These flyers include the hours and are tailored to the location of the voters to provide their polling place address. We also provide information on our website and by email. We have also begun to utilize social media to reach more people, both young and old. The organization

publicized its endorsement session to the public, welcoming their attendance, in the municipal elections last spring so that those who are interested can attend and hear the candidate presentations in person.

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?**

I have worked to continue to open up the process for the appointment process when it occurs. Bridget Gainer, 10th Cook County Board seat, Heather Steans, 7th District Senate seat, and Kelly Cassidy, 14th District House seat are recent examples. By holding the meeting in public and opening up the process to all potential candidates by publicly soliciting participation the pool is greatly expanded. In the most recent 14th District vacancy 23 people were heard and were required to address a list of approximately 10 policy positions that are important to residents of the district. I am happy to say that I believe my ward produced about 75% of the candidates that applied because in conjunction with the Alderman, 13,000 went out asking people to consider applying.

17. **Question for Incumbent: What have you done to involve more people in the political process? What further steps will you take?**

The 49th Ward has an open door policy, all are welcome. We have just revitalized our website to better utilize social media. We have sponsored a Young Democrat, utilized the tools and are working to expand our presence on the web. Our email list continues to grow with more than 3,000 addresses and I have held more than 100 meeting across the ward for the sole purpose of inviting people to become active in the Democratic Party of the 49th Ward.

18. **Will you follow the Cook County judicial retention “vote Yes” campaign?**

NO. We have evaluated, based on bar ratings across the spectrum of bar associations, each individual and have recommend judicial candidates we consider worthy of retention.

19. **For Republicans: What actions will you take to make the GOP more competitive in Cook County races?**

Does not apply.