

**IVI-IPO 2012 CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1**

DATE December 12, 2011 PARTY: Democrat

NAME: Ricardo Muñoz

VOTING ADDRESS: 3021 S. Lawndale Ave., Chicago

HOME PHONE: Cell: 773/447-1762 BUSINESS PHONE: 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward Office: 773/762-1771

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: 2500 S. St. Louis Ave., Chicago

CAMPAIGN PHONE: 773/762-4900 FAX: 773/762-1825

EMAIL: rickmunoz22@gmail.com WEBSITE: taxpayersforrick.com

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: General consultant: Andrew Sharp, cell: 773/447-1763

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 34,965 NUMBER REQUIRED: 5,693

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

Alderman, 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward, 1993 - Present

Democratic Committeeman, 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward, 2000 - Present

Democratic State Central Committeeman, 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, 2006 - Present

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

C) What is your primary occupation?

Member of the Chicago City Council

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

I've been a Board Member and strong supporter of organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA. I've been an active participant in pro-labor causes ranging from the Living Wage to justice for our hotel workers. In my neighborhood, I helped organize the hunger strike that led to the construction of our first new high school in over 90 years.

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 graduated from Northern Illinois University and majored in Political Science with an emphasis on pre-Law.

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

Last year, I was an early advocate and organizer for our current County Board President, Toni Preckwinkle. I also took a leading role in the election of her colleague on the Board, Jesus Garcia. I was also an early supporter of Water Reclamation District Commissioner Deb Shore, who I am once again endorsing.

At the national level, I endorsed Barack Obama for President early in the 2008 campaign and traveled extensively to support his election – at my own personal expense – including Nevada and Texas.

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

Bob Fioretti, Alderman, 2nd Ward  
Toni Foulkes, Alderman, 15th Ward  
Ariel Reboyras, Alderman, 30th Ward  
Scott Waguespack, Alderman, 32nd Ward  
Rey Colon, Alderman, 35th Ward  
Nick Sposato, Alderman, 36th Ward  
John Arena, Alderman, 45th Ward  
James Cappleman, Alderman, 46th Ward  
Ameya Pawar, Alderman, 47th Ward  
Joe Moore, Alderman, 49th Ward  
Jesus Garcia, Cook County Commissioner, 7th District  
Edwin Reyes, Cook County Commissioner, 8th District  
Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President and 4th Ward Committeeman

**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?

As a reformer, I am running for Clerk of the Circuit Court to fix one of the last corners of corruption in Cook County. A nation of laws cannot survive without an organized, efficient system of justice. Our County cannot run without an effective Court system. I will be a Clerk who makes sure single mothers get their child support payments on time, makes sure commercial litigation does not drag on for years, makes sure everyone accused of a crime gets a speedy trial.

Under Dorothy Brown, the Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office is wasteful and arrogant. The Clerk refuses to allow e-filing on more than 95% of all new cases, resulting in an outdated system one reporter described as stepping back into a Charles Dickens novel. Brown uses professional staff as her private chauffeur and only stopped accepting cash gifts from the workers she supervises after media attention last year. Though she calls herself "The Pearl of Illinois," Brown is not accountable to local taxpayers. She only stays in power through large unregulated contributions to her campaign fund from Cook County vendors with headquarters in other states.

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

Our exact budget is strategic and internal information. We have raised over \$100,000 to date.

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

We have 7 people on staff and approximately 2,000 on our active volunteer list

## **IVI-IPO 2012 CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2**

1. Will you accept or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers, employees or outside contractors of this office?

No

2. Will you employ or have you employed staff in your office who hold other public sector jobs concurrently?

No

3. 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 county

No

4. In what circumstances would you contract for outside professional services and what criteria would you implement for letting contracts? Please comment on any existing abuses and how you would correct them.

As a member of the City Council, I have actively worked for passage of the privatization accountability ordinance and would be guided by its strict standards as the next Clerk of the Circuit Court.

5. Would you support contracting for outside services with companies located outside Cook County? Why or why not?

Yes, if the vendor were able to provide more value for Cook County taxpayers, satisfy our MWBE requirements, adhere to our environmental and other public health/safety regulations and demonstrate a record of respecting the rights of their workforce.

6. Do you support Patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?

No

7. Do you support Affirmative Action?

Yes

8. Do you favor restructuring the wage scale of county employees to correct disparities based on gender by instituting equal pay for jobs of comparable worth?

I strongly support equal pay for equal work.

9. In what ways should the administration of the Clerk's office be improved?

It is simply impossible to create a culture of accountability inside the Clerk's Office, while the Clerk is actively receiving campaign contributions from her staff. I would end that practice immediately.

10. What questions of public policy arise in the administration of this office, and what guidelines do you suggest for seeking answers to such questions?

The most fundamental issue the Clerk's Office must tackle is the question of access to justice. I believe our success should be measured by the quality and quantity of the justice we provide to the people of Cook County. Can people afford to seek relief in the Courts? Are the Courts able to handle their concerns in a timely fashion. A nation of laws cannot exist without a robust court system – one supported by an efficient Clerk.

12. In your opinion, are there administrative duties that should be added to this office in the interest of efficiency and effective functioning of the courts? Are there duties presently performed that might be more reasonably performed by another agency?

I believe we could save the taxpayers money by assuming the duties now performed by the Recorder of Deeds.

13. How would you work with other agencies to decrease the backlog of court cases?

1. I will put on the court call for every case in every division the number of continuances in that case so that the judge, the litigants, the attorneys and the public can see which cases are taking a long time to try to speed things up.

2. I will work with agency heads to give them any case management info they need to better manage their staff, resources and decision making.

3. I will work with the Bar Association committees to identify ways to assist in speeding things up.

14. What reforms will you implement to prevent the theft, misfiling and disappearance of court case files from the Clerk's office?

Electronic filing is ultimately the only guarantee that records do not get misplaced or purposefully removed from case files.

15. How would you improve public access to information?

The expansion of electronic filing will be a vast improvement over the current archaic system.

16. What measures would you use to collect filing fees, fines and repayment of NSF checks given to the clerk's office?

I have major concerns about Dorothy Brown's decision to accept a \$10,000 contribution from the sister company of Penn Credit, the vendor now helping with the collection of outstanding fines and fees. The fact that she accepted this contribution and went to some lengths to hide it from the public are disturbing. As Clerk, I will conduct a full audit of our collection results and look for areas of improvement.

17. Should this office be elected or appointed? If appointed, by whom?

Elected

18. Should the Clerk report to the County Board or to the Chief Judge?

County Board

19. What plans do you have to implement an "E-Filing" system in all divisions?

The federal government has had a form of e-filing for 16 years, and DuPage County has had it for at least 5 years. The simple fact is Cook County would have e-filing if Dorothy Brown had not mismanaged the process. I will seek to reopen the bidding process and refuse to accept political contributions from any companies involved.

20. What safeguards would you implement to prohibit employees from doing political work on county time?

I would start by setting a good example and ending Dorothy Brown's practice of using county workers as her personal chauffeurs. Her workers have been filmed loading campaign signs into her taxpayer-funded county vehicle. That is simply unacceptable.

21. Will you ask or have others ask current county employees to work on your campaign?

No, although I hope Commissioner Jesus Garcia will continue to be one of my best volunteers.