

IVI-IPO 2012 WARD COMMITTEEMAN QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE: January 9, 2012 WARD: 1st Ward PARTY: Democrat

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Matt McWhinney and Mia Phifer

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 1332 NUMBER REQUIRED: 415

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates. None

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

C) What is your primary occupation? Attorney

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years. See attached resume and bio.

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 have a BS in Marketing from DePaul University and a JD from IIT Chicago Kent College of Law. My 16 years of legal practice has been advocating for the rights of the individual and small businesses. As president of several volunteer and non-profit organizations and other leadership positions in other organizations, I gained the experience to work with volunteers to achieve difficult goals serving the organization's constituents and the greater society. I also learned how to organize people in a way that maximized productivity, as well as program goal completion. Since most of these organizations were self-funded, I learned how to effectively fundraise and work efficiently with limited funds.

I have also volunteered on many Democratic campaigns from field work to kitchen cabinet. In fact, I was on the kitchen cabinet for the late Hon. Judge Sandra Otaka's judicial campaign in the 9th Sub Circuit of Cook County, where she became the first Asian American elected to a position in Cook County. I volunteered to handle her database and devoted countless hours working on the database, fundraising, and field work.

More recently, I organized thousands of community members in the 13th District Police Station boundaries and brought to the forefront the public safety issues and concerns of the neighborhood and how important the Police Station was to the people.

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

I supported and volunteered for Naisy Dolar's campaign for 50th Ward Alderman on her finance committee. I helped gather signatures, canvassed, and put up signs for Patrick Murphy when he ran for Cook County State's attorney. I was on the executive planning committee for the Asian American fundraiser for Barack Obama for his second U.S. Senate bid and volunteered for his presidency bid and re-election. For Hon. Sandra Otaka's race for judgeship in the 9th Judicial Sub Circuit, I helped fundraise by preparing and sending out over 1000 mailings from a database I created of Asian American residents in

Cook County and I also co-Chaired the database committee. For the late Judge Otaka's campaign, I also canvassed, put up signs and volunteered on election day to get out the vote. I also did some canvassing and door-to-door work for Aurora Austriaco when she ran as the Democratic candidate in the 65th District State Legislative race. When Former U.S. Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson ran for re-election, I also canvassed and went door-to door for her campaign. When Raja Krishnamoorthi ran for State Comptroller, I hosted fundraisers for his campaign and also did phone banking for him. I did phone banking for Attorney General Lisa Madigan and marched in parades for her when she first ran for Attorney General and have since been on host committees for her fundraisers. I also was on the host committee for Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and have supported her campaigns. I was on the Chinatown host committee for State Senator Kwame Raoul. I supported, marched in the Gay Pride Parade, contributed, and helped host a fundraiser for Hon. Judge Laura Liu's campaign for Judge in the 8th Judicial Sub Circuit. I also supported and hosted a fundraiser for Paula Basta who is running for State Representative in the 14th District. I hosted a fundraiser for Linda Pael when she ran for Judge in Cook County. I also did fundraising for Alderman Ameva Pawar and contributed to his campaign.

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far. I am in the process of seeking endorsements now.

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 energy and dedication to my community and to the Democratic party. I have been involved in the campaigns of many independent and progressive Democratic candidates and support an independent platform grounded on transparency, citizen participation, and encouraging voter participation. I also strongly believe in transparency and getting input from the community. Engaging the community in a meaningful manner will lead to more voter registrations and participation in elections.

I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date? My budget is \$25,000 and we are starting fundraising this month in January.

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list? I have one paid campaign staff member, 1 treasurer, 1 database chair, and 1 campaign manager. I have about 40 volunteers so far on my list.

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? Although I understand that gathering signatures and fighting a petition challenge has the potential for disenfranchising independent grass roots candidates from running, having personally experienced this in my first political race, ultimately, I think the process still makes it accessible for serious candidates. I think basing the number of required signatures on a percentage is more fair than an arbitrary number and limiting the maximum number of signatures makes the task easier on a new candidate.
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 people of the 1st Ward should have input and be included in the selection process. There should be an open door policy and the constituents should be engaged in the process.
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 am for inclusivity and having an open door policy. I believe in reaching out to the community and presenting them with the facts about each candidate, rather than the community having to reach out to me. My job is to work for the people of the 1st Ward and to obtain their input in the slating process. I would educate the people on the credentials of each candidate rather than simply telling them who to vote for.

4. Should the party finance the campaigns of selected candidates in contested primary elections or non-partisan elections (such as aldermanic elections)? **I think funds should be mostly used for general elections. Money should not be a barrier to the election process. Resources should be allocated towards educating people on the candidates. Also, the burden of raising funds should be on the candidate and his or her ability to engage the voters.**
5. Does a committeeman have a responsibility to support the party's candidates after they have been selected in a primary election? **Times are changing and people want transparency in the government process. I advocate an open door policy, which is becoming more prevalent today. I would take the pulse of the community as part of my job in educating the community as to the candidates and I would then represent my constituents. I strongly believe in inclusivity of the voters. However, with that said, as the Democratic Committeeman my job is to support the candidate chosen by the Democratic voters barring a candidate who is not qualified for the office due to serious ethical or criminal issues that would prevent him or her from performing the duties of office.**
6. Do you feel it is appropriate for elected officials to hold a party office? Please explain your position. **There doesn't necessarily have to be an inconsistency or conflict if an elected official also holds a party office, as long as the underlying values of inclusivity and transparency are present and the individual can do both jobs without sacrificing service to the constituents. If there is a conflict, the official needs to weigh that and make the appropriate decision to step aside or down from one position. People need to be part of the process. Conducting town hall style forums for voters to meet and speak to potential candidates, as well as other similar type of events to engage voters with the process should be also be part of that underlying value.**
7. Have you or would you send letters to government officials soliciting jobs or promotions for individuals? **No and I would not.**
8. Have you formed or would you form a ward-wide organization? Discuss structure, meetings, membership, staff and budget. **I have not yet, but I would form a community wide organization open to everyone in the community who wishes to be involved. The organization would allow people to have a voice. I want to turn the disenfranchised voters and residents into engaged voters in my efforts to get citizens registered and out to vote. Membership would be open to all of the diverse members of the 1st Ward and cross every economic strata. Diversity is not just a concept but a reality in the 1st Ward and in addition to other ethnic groups also includes a large 30% population of Hispanic residents. I have worked with all the different ethnic groups in my community and also in my practice as an advocate for the individual.**
9. How do you propose to finance your ward operations? **Through fundraising activities when necessary, which is not the main goal and I will have sufficient resources to represent the people in the 1st Ward.**
10. What plans do you have to enhance voter registration and voter turnout in your ward? **As stated above, I believe in inclusivity and re-engaging the Community. I would conduct regular voter registration drives and participate in community events. I would conduct town hall meetings and sponsor events where the neighborhood could meet their elected officials and also learn about issues that affect the 1st Ward. I would make sure that there are materials and proper language access for the diverse members of our Ward at the above events and on election day. I would make sure that language is not a barrier for citizen participation. By having an open door policy and leaving no one outside,**

people will know they can make a difference and feel part of the political process. This will also allow people to be part of their 1st Ward Democratic organization and really be involved on a grass roots level, which is the job of a Committeeman. When people feel engaged and listened to and have access to the process, they will act and will vote. If in addition to this, I make it easy for the community to register to vote, obtain the information necessary, and be engaged, then I can increase voter registration and turn out.

11. Does your organization have/or will have members? If so how does one become a member? **It will have members as I outlined above in my answer to paragraph 8 above. I want to be as inclusive as possible because I believe strongly through practice that inclusion is the best way to bring about positive change and community engagement which will naturally lead to increased voter registration and voter turnout. I want my organization to be the community – inclusivity over exclusivity. I would welcome anyone from the community to join me in this new opportunity to engage voters...into one solid 1st Ward community.**
12. Should members of a ward organization have a role in determining endorsements? **Since my ward organization will be inclusive and operate under an open door policy welcoming all constituents to participate, under those circumstances, they should have a role in determining endorsements. I believe that the Democratic voters of the 1st Ward should be given the credential and facts regarding each potential candidate seeking endorsement. They should also have the opportunity at an event or town hall, organized or spearheaded by the committeeman, to speak to and question candidates. Then they should have input in who the 1st Ward Democrats should endorse.**
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 absolutely. As someone who comes from the 1st Ward neighborhood and is a grass roots candidate, one of my motivations for running is for an open and transparent government which includes open communications between residents, activists, and elected officials. I am working for a better 1st Ward and there cannot be a better 1st Ward without active participation from the people of the 1st Ward. Therefore, I plan on maintaining a current and up to date website with information and volunteer opportunities.**
14. What idea do you have to finding and retaining high quality election judges? **I would make sure people are given the information about being an election judge, how critical the job is to a fair and open election day, and the opportunity to apply to be an election judge. I think by informing the community and drawing from a larger pool of candidates, you will attract high quality persons to act as election judges. I would reach out to multi-ethnic community groups...I think unfortunately, in today's political climate, people generally feel jaded and disenfranchised about the political process, but if you operate under an open door policy and in a spirit of inclusiveness rather than back door dealing and exclusivity, than you will attract and retain high quality people in this often thankless position, but integral position.**
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? **My strategy is to have an open door policy and be inclusive and to promote that to the constituents. I want to turn around the perception that most deals are done in “smoke filled” back rooms, which is not often the case today, by conducting open meetings. I want to be the vehicle for people to have input into these decisions. By providing people with easy access to information through a website, social media, and newsletters and conducting more town hall meetings and events, this will help to increase voter participation. Additionally as to**

younger voters, I think it's important to be involved with the neighborhood schools before many young people vote, so they can see how important it is to be part of the political process and how it works on a practical day-to-day basis locally. I had many young people help me on our Save the 13th District Police Station campaign and I welcomed their help.

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? **As I stated previously, it's important to have an open door policy and an inclusive policy. There should be town hall meetings and events for people to meet, question, and speak to potential candidates and officials who can provide information on vacancies. There should also be information readily available for people regarding vacancies and even how someone could apply themselves and be involved. As the committeeman, I want to be the vehicle for the people to voice their opinions and provide input in the decision making process.**
17. Question for Incumbent: What have you done to involve more people in the political process? What further steps will you take? **Not applicable.**
18. Will you follow the Cook County judicial retention "vote Yes" campaign? **I believe in educating the voters and making sure they have the information they need to make an informed decision as to retaining Cook County judges. As a member of the Alliance of Bar Association's judicial evaluation committee for almost a decade, I know how extensive the process is in evaluating sitting judges for retention purposes and I take seriously the need for retaining high quality judges on the bench.**
19. **For Republicans:** What actions will you take to make the GOP more competitive in Cook County races? **Not applicable.**