

IVI-IPO 2006 COOK COUNTY CLERK QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

Cook County Clerk David Orr
Candidate for Re-election as Cook County Clerk

A) Elective or appointive public or party office previously held including dates?

This is my 27th year as an elected official in Chicago and Cook County. I served as alderman of the 49th ward continuously from 1979 to 1990. While a member of the City Council, I served as chair of the Committee on Special Events and Cultural Affairs (1986-1987), as Vice-Mayor (1987-1988) and as Interim Mayor for one week in 1987. I was elected Cook County Clerk in 1990 and re-elected in 1994, 1998, and 2002.

Additionally, I was elected as a Paul Simon delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1988.

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

None

C) What is your primary occupation?

Cook County Clerk

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

I have served as a full-time alderman and Cook County Clerk since 1979. I served a two-year term (1988-1990) as a Board member of the National League of Cities. I have been active with the City Club of Chicago, the Illinois Public Action Council, IVI-IPO, Network 49, and the Community Renewal Society and was co-founder of the Rogers Park Tenants Committee, the Committee for Better Housing and the Farwell Neighbors block club, and founded the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing. I currently serve as President of the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC) and serve as one of 37 advisers to the federal Election Assistance Committee (EAC), which provides recommendations on how to improve elections at a national level. I am also a member of the Election Committee of International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT) and the National Election Center.

I have received awards from the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Peace Council, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Housing Agenda, Housing Opportunities for Women, IVI-IPO (including the 1985 Leon Despres Award and the 1983 Glynn Sudbery

Award), Lakeview Tenants Organization, Metropolitan Tenants' Organizations, and the North Lakeside Cultural Center.

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 masters degree in American History from Case Western Reserve University and taught American History and Urban Studies at Mundelein College for ten years prior to being elected alderman in 1979. At Mundelein, I co-founded the Weekend College Program and was director of the Community Studies Program.

As a member of the Chicago City Council, I authored the Chicago Tenant-Landlord Ordinance, Residential Security Ordinance, housing court reforms, Nuclear Weapon-Free Chicago Ordinance, percent-for-the-arts program, legislation prohibiting gender discrimination in private clubs, liquor license reforms, aldermanic expense allowance disclosure requirements, nursing home bill of rights, and the Sidewalk Café Ordinance. I also served on Mayor Washington's Advisory Committee on Ethics in Government, which drafted Chicago's Ethics Ordinance, and I played a major role in securing its passage. I was a strong advocate and co-sponsor of the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance.

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

I have been an active participant in progressive politics since the late 1960s. I have supported and worked for numerous independent candidates including Paul Simon, Harold Washington, Jan Schakowsky, Carol Ronen, Woods Bowman, Lane Evans, Larry Bloom, Danny Davis, Alice Palmer, Jesus Garcia, Deborah Senn, Clem Balanoff, Mike Kreloff, Carol Moseley-Braun, Miguel Del Valle, John Steele, Helen Schiller, Joe Moore, Dawn Clark-Netsch, Richard Durbin, Larry McKeon and others. I believe it is important to elect progressive independents to all offices.

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

For the 2006 primary I received endorsements from the following organizations:

Citizen Action/IL	Painters District Council 14
IBEW Local 134, Local 21	Personal PAC
IBT Local 705	Plasterers' Local 5
Illinois AFL-CIO	SEIU Illinois Council, Local 73, Local 880
Illinois Council of Machinists	UAW Illinois PAC
Indo-American Democratic Organization	UFCW Local 881
IUOE Local 143	Chicago Association of Realtors
Local 17	Chicago Teacher Union PAC
Local 399	Construction and General Laborers

H) Why should you be endorsed over the other candidate? What goals for the office are most important to you personally?

In my fifteen years as County Clerk, we have taken an old-fashioned, patronage-laden office and put it well on the road to being a modern, efficient operation. We have improved customer service and made management more efficient, we made the office more accountable to the taxpayers and we have increased public access through modernization. Some of my current goals include:

- Election Reform
- Voter Education
- Election Judge Training
- Continued Technological Enhancement

Since taking the office of Cook County Clerk in 1990, I led the successful fight for the motor-voter law in Illinois, which made registering to vote easier and more convenient. I also drafted legislation to merge off-year school board and municipal elections – a move that now saves Illinois taxpayers \$7.5 million every other year. I advocated for new laws taking effect in 2006, including legislation that: allows voters to cast ballots before Election Day; extends the voter registration deadline; mandates a voter-verifiable paper trail for voters to review before casting their ballots on touch-screen machines; and enables disabled voters to vote independently and privately.

My office has been recognized for its efforts to protect voter rights and simplify the election process. Our Election Protection initiative, Voter Bill of Rights, voter education campaigns and redesign of election materials have helped reduce polling place confusion and minimize ballot errors. Further, the Teen Democracy programs, judge-training materials, interactive elections website and Chad and Dimples advertising campaign each won national awards. In addition, I recently testified before a federal panel on the success of the county's provisional voting program that provides a safety net for voters so their votes will count.

As a result of my emphasis on managing costs, my office has returned nearly \$25 million in unspent budget appropriations to the county since 1990. My staff developed new technology to prepare ballots in house, saving taxpayers \$1 million every year. Despite new federal mandates, the Clerk's office has cut nearly \$600,000 in annual overtime costs since 1996.

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

Our campaign budget is yet to be determined.

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

I am currently assembling my campaign staff.

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1) Will you accept or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers, employees or contractors?

I support the County ordinance that places strict limits on campaign contributions from vendors, but I would like to see those limits lowered.

Citizens for David Orr does not accept donation from Shakman-covered employees except employees who wish to attend a Citizens for Orr fundraiser where they are simply asked to reimburse the committee for the per-person cost of the event itself.

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

I have not and do not intend to employ individuals who hold other public sector jobs.

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?

I have not and do not intend to employ individuals who have a business relationship with entities that do business with the County Clerk's office.

4) In what circumstances should the Clerk's office 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.

The County Clerk's office contracts for outside professional services only when we do not have the needed skills in-house to do a particular job, and only when it is more cost-effective. We let contracts on the basis of professional competence and cost.

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

Cook County's purchasing ordinance provides a preference for businesses located in the county. Here's how it works: If the lowest bidder is outside the county and the next lowest bidder is in the county and within 2% of the price of the lowest bidder, then the county may select the next lowest bidder. I support this provision as a good balance between the obligation to secure the lowest responsive bidder and the important goal of assisting local businesses.

6) Do you support patronage?

No

7) Do you support Affirmative Action?

I support Affirmative Action as it pertains to fair and equitable access to employment opportunities for all individuals.

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 support equal pay for equal work. I support a comparable worth readjustment plan aimed at guaranteeing that women and men are paid at the same rate for the same jobs.

9) In what ways can this office work more effectively with other county and municipal offices to avoid duplication and waste?

We have implemented many programs with other governmental agencies that are designed not only to cut waste but to provide more efficient service to our customers. Some of our accomplishments are as follows:

- A joint purchasing agreement with the City of Chicago Board of Elections Commissioners for ballot punch cards, ballot design and layout printing services;
- A cooperative effort with the Cook County Treasurer's office to design an inter-office billing and payment system for delinquent taxes not sold at the annual tax sale;
- A joint project between the Clerk of the Board and the Secretary of the Board to share information electronically;
- A joint plan between the Clerk's office and County Board's Re-districting Sub-Committee to purchase an electronic map development (GIS) system that my office now maintains and operates;
- An agreement with the State of Illinois Vital Records Department to design a computerized system for generating birth records;
- A joint contract with the County Treasurer and Recorder to provide armored care pick-up and delivery service between all of our offices.

10) What should be the role of the Clerk's office in tax reactivation?

I have been a long-time advocate of tax reactivation programs and was instrumental in promoting these programs as a member of the City Council. While as Clerk I do not have any direct authority for the administration of tax reactivation programs, which are under the jurisdiction of the City of Chicago and other municipalities with the county, I have nevertheless worked with other county offices and the County Board to streamline the county's no-cash bid procedures and to provide delinquent property information to community development groups.

I was a strong supporter and advocate of the constitutional amendment passed in 1990 to reduce the years of delinquency a property owner can accumulate before the property is offered at a scavenger sale from five years to two years and to cut the redemption period for properties of six units or less from two years to six months.

11) What procedures, if any, would you institute to insure that election judges are better trained?

Much of the talk surrounding election reform nationwide has dealt with machinery. The Clerk's office has also focused on the human element of running elections.

More than 12,500 election judges work in suburban Cook County along and all were re-trained for the 2006 primary. We also overhauled our election judge-training program to ensure judges were well prepared to assist voters, particularly in regards to the newly implemented voting technology. There are a number of changes that have been initiated since 2002 and for the 2006 general.

- *Smaller class sizes.* The Clerk's office used to hold election judge trainings in gymnasiums and auditoriums that could hold up to 250 people at a time. We have reduced the class size to no more than 50 judges at a time. This makes it more intimate and judges are less intimidated to ask questions.
- *Better instruction/more trainers.* The Clerk's office also hired a professional trainer to instruct our election judge trainers. This was to provide trainers with better presentation skills.
- *Enhanced judge trainings.* Along with the reduced class sizes, the trainings are more hands on, three break out sessions allow every judge to use the equipment and address specific situations.
- *New election judge manual.* We continue to update the manual to make it easier to understand and user friendly with more graphics and diagrams and less text.
- *Testing.* We enhanced our testing of judges. Anyone incorrectly answering several questions following a post-training test will have to attend another training until they successfully complete the test.
- *New positions/training series.* For the 2006 general election the Clerk's office will hire 1,600 Election Equipment Managers to help ensure the set-up, operation, and breakdown of new voting technologies as well as ensure the accurate and smooth consolidation and transmission of results. These election administrators will receive additional training, with sessions focusing on each voting technology.
- *Voter assistance.* We continue to stress that voters are customers and judges should be as helpful as possible. That includes giving demonstrations of the voting equipment, letting voters know they can get a new ballot if they make a mistake, making them aware of their rights (a voter bill of rights will be posted in each polling place, etc.).