

**IVI-IPO 2007 CHICAGO ALDERMANIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

DATE: 1/2/07

WARD: 50

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NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 2,116 NUMBER REQUIRED: 152

*Please provide the following background information:*

**Elective or appointive public and/or party offices previously held including dates.**

In 2000, I was appointed by Mayor Daley to serve as his Director/Community Liaison for the Advisory Council on Asian Affairs. I represented Mayor Daley among more than 125,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the city of Chicago. In this capacity, I represented the mayor during public community events; conducted outreach to the Asian American community about city initiatives; and raised the concerns of Asian American constituents in city government. I resigned from this position in May 2006 so that I could be a full-time aldermanic candidate for the 50<sup>th</sup> ward.

In April 2006, I was elected as a Community Representative on Decatur Classical School's Local School Council (LSC), serving as the first alumna in this position (I was unopposed in this election).

**Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.**

Other than my election to the LSC, this is my first time running for public office. I want to broaden my scope of service and bring my government experience to my local neighborhood.

**Principal business, educational, professional and civic activities of the past ten years.**

I have been an active community advocate serving the Asian Pacific American community both personally and professionally for the last 13 years. For the last six years, I held the position of Director/Community Liaison for the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Asian Affairs. Previously, I served as Loyola University Chicago's Assistant Director of Student Life/ Coordinator of Asian American Student Affairs in the Department of Student Diversity.

In addition to my extensive involvement within the Asian American community, I have served as past co-president, vice-president and board member for the Chicago League of Women Voters. I also became the first alumna to serve as a national board member for Public Allies. I am currently a consultant for the Anti-Defamation League's A World of Difference Program and the National Coalition Building Institute.

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

I earned an undergraduate degree in Applied Psychology from Loyola University and I earned a Master's degree in Community Counseling and Human Services from Roosevelt University. My civic involvement has helped shape my foundation and philosophy about public service. My community and government experience gave me the perspective and knowledge about how to best serve my community as a Chicago alderman. In addition, through my graduate studies in counseling and human services, I gained a fuller appreciation of how access and knowledge can empower people to improve their lives. I have the professional experience, the track-record of public service and the educational background to do the job.

**Activities for other candidates. Please be specific.**

- I and members of our field team volunteered for Tammy Duckworth's GOTV operation during the March 2006 primary election.
- I was actively involved as a field volunteer for the Campaign to elect Judge Sandra Otaka. Judge Otaka is the first Asian American judge to be elected in Illinois.
- I served as Co-Chair, along with Jerry Clarito and Aurora Abella-Austriaco, for a Filipinos for Jan Schakowsky fundraiser in Skokie, Illinois.
- I served on the coordinating committee for an "Asian Americans for Lisa Madigan" rally during her campaign for Attorney General.
- I volunteered when the Democratic National Convention came to Chicago in 1996.

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

To date, I have been endorsed by Hon. Mike Honda, U.S. Representative; Vice-Chair, Democratic National Committee; Judge Abner Mikva (Retired); Hon. Anjana Hansen, 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman, Evanston; Hon. Jerry Clarito, Commissioner, Skokie Park District; the national Asian American Action Fund and the Asian American Law Enforcement Association, in addition to 87 community leaders, 28 of whom are on my Finance Committee.

Endorsers: Veronica Arreola, Dale Asis, Mehrdad Azemun, Yuchia Chang, Erica Chianelli, Denise DeBelle, Ania Drechsler, Selma D'Souza, Angela Ebreo, Gary Falzer, Rudy Figueroa, Myrna Garcia, Andrew Goldman, Wendy Hall, Bethann Hester, Mae Hong, Grace Hou, Kathy Im, Christine Jacob, Edward Johnson, Linda Jong, April Kunze, Tuyet Le, Jin Lee, Nicole Lee, Hospicio and Stella Lubaton, Patricia Mackin, Tony Martinez, Roosy Miller, Salam Mohammed, Mary Morten, Serena Moy, Scott Nelson, Lourdes Nisperos, Gerardo and Margaret Reyes, Juanita Salvador-Burris, Clarita Santos, Kompha Seth, Radhika Sharma Gordon, Pamela Stauffer, Joanna Su, Jane Sullivan, Michael Takada, Sharda Thapa, Darryl Tom, Anh Kim Tran, Chaffee Tran, Victoria Tung, Jonathan and Kelly VanderBrug, Grace and Win Villamora, Thu Vo, William Yoshino, Kyungnan Yu, William Yu, and Patricia Yuzawa-Rubin.

Finance Committee (in formation): Aurora Abella Austriaco, Scott Bae, Ram Cabanero, George Cagadas, Michael Chu, Charles and Heather Daas, Rama and Sandya Dandamudi, Carmen Estacio, Gabriel Fisz, Francisco and Isabel Juan, Yvonne Lau, Jimmy Lee, Ben Lumicao, Maricar Madrid-Crost, Eric Mah, Julie and Jun Recometa, Hermie Sanchez, Warren Tai, Emily Tapia, Ho Tran, Dan Vicencio, Rey Villar, Tekie Woldegebriel, Poxie Xumsai, and Lisa Yee.

**As concisely as possible, 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 only challenger with public and community service experience, with a broad vision for the ward and a platform that addresses the key issues in the neighborhood. In addition, I am the only candidate that is incorporating the philosophy of participatory democracy by reaching out to all sectors of the 50<sup>th</sup> ward and establishing a Residents' Action and Advisory Committee. I come from a family that is committed to public

service; my mother served in the Air Force, my father worked for the Board of Health, and my husband, Ben Cherek, is a Chicago Police Officer.

The goals that are most important to me include:

- bringing good government back to the ward;
- improving our schools and social services;
- creating safer neighborhoods; and
- renewing the business districts.

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

Our campaign budget is \$150,000, and to date, we have raised \$71,586.50.

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

I have 12 people on my core campaign staff: two paid (campaign manager, field director), and 11 unpaid (Communications Director and Co-Director, Fundraising Co-Chairs, Co-Chairs of the Residents' Action and Advisory Council, Constituent Advocate, Volunteer Coordinator, Website Manager, and Operations Director. In addition, we will soon be hiring a part-time Fundraising Consultant. We have a total of 382 volunteers who have signed up to help with the campaign, including 157 residents. Seventy-two volunteers have been out in the field, and we have a core group of 48 regular volunteers who have worked to date on fundraising, field, and communications.

## **PRIORITIES**

1. a. What employment, other than alderman, if any, do you intend to hold?

Currently, I serve as a diversity training consultant for the Anti-Defamation League's A World of Difference Program and for the National Coalition Building Institute. I will continue to consult with these two organizations on an as-needed basis.

b. How will you divide your time between your aldermanic duties and your other occupation?

I will be a full-time Alderman; I expect to spend only approximately 10 hours during each quarter in my consulting role for the above organizations.

c. Please specify the minimum hours per week you will spend performing your aldermanic duties.

I consider the Aldermanic position as a full-time job and expect to serve in this role at least 50 hours per week, which includes attending community-based events.

2. a. Please describe your service office staffing plan, including the number of staff, full and part time, how you will pay for them and the number of hours per week that your service office will be open.

Currently, each Alderman is provided with funding for 3 full-time staff positions and a part-time contractual position. I will maintain this level of staffing, with 1 full-time policy director in city hall, and 1 full-time constituent service director and a full-time outreach liaison at the ward service office, which will be open 40 hours per week. In addition, I will hire a part-time contractual resource manager to identify grants and other resources that we can build partnerships with to enhance local schools and other vital ward programs and organizations.

b. What services need improvement in your ward? How will you achieve this?

City services should be accessible to all people and residents should be informed of city resources and initiatives. I will move the office to a more visible location and will inform the community about the resources they need through newsletters, website and public forums. I will maintain a staff that is efficient and responsive to the multi-lingual population that we serve.

In addition, basic capital improvements are needed in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, including high-speed traffic deterrents near elementary schools, accessible sidewalks for residents with limited mobility, and road and curb improvements on the Devon Avenue business district. I will work with city departments including Departments of Transportation, Planning and Development, and Streets and Sanitation to ensure that these services are prioritized and implemented in a timely fashion.

3. What are your top priorities for the Ward?

My priorities include: bringing good government back to the ward; improving our schools and social services; creating safer neighborhoods; and renewing the business districts.

Good government: The people of the 50th ward deserve to have a say in what goes on in our neighborhood. With my years of outreach experience, I will create a new model for addressing the issues we face in the ward and ensuring that all residents can access city services. My plans include:

- Creating a "Ward Resource" office that will house information such as a new residents resource package, educational/public school opportunities and other city-related information.
- Designating an outreach liaison who reaches out about city initiatives and assists in community concerns such as zoning and city budgets.
- Developing civic participation and supporting community input. This includes creating an interfaith ward council, promoting voter registration, establishing an educational roundtable and implementing a Residents Action and Advisory Committee.

Schools and social services: Education and social services are key to the prosperity of the 50th ward. I serve on Decatur Classical School's LSC because I believe that investments in education and social services will reap dividends in future years. In fact, I believe that it is essential for an alderman to have a deep interest and passion for the education of our children and the care of our elderly. Some of my initiatives include:

- Actively promoting the successes of our schools to local and national funding resources, inviting model initiatives to come to our ward.
- Organizing a school fair to help promote educational successes and student achievement.

Safer neighborhoods: I stand with the residents who want safer streets in our community and I am committed to making it happen. Safety is one of our most basic needs in life, and yet, we continue to lose trust in each other because our current alderman has chosen to ignore these issues. In order for our community to thrive, we must feel free to walk to and from home and speak with our neighbors. My strategies include:

- Generating attendance at Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) beat meetings.
- Sponsoring hate crime prevention forums and designating "Safe Streets" where patrol officers are encouraged to monitor major thoroughfares.
- Requiring high-speed traffic deterrents in school areas and religious and non-profit facilities that serve children and the elderly.
- Creating more constructive alternatives for our youth to be involved in our community. I will offer service-learning programs and establish an internship program in the ward office.

Renewing the business districts: Small businesses are the lifeblood and pulse of the 50th ward. In fact, tourists from all over the world visit Devon Avenue, where diverse and vibrant stores welcome strangers like family. Small businesses also support the families in this ward, and each entrepreneur deserves fair access and support from the alderman. My vision to uplift the business districts includes:

- Supporting a Devon Avenue Task Force that works with planning experts to address issues such as parking, traffic and cleanliness.
- Instituting a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) oversight board and supporting a community-driven Planning and Zoning board.

4. How will you solicit and follow citizens' and community groups' recommendations on City matters?

I strongly believe in participatory government and will work to ensure community input on all city matters. I will hire a full-time outreach liaison to build and establish relationships with community-based organizations. I have already established a Residents' Action and Advisory Council that will remain active after I am elected to keep me informed and educated on community concerns. On matters of community development, I fully support and will actively participate in a resident-based Community Planning Board, that will work with the Department of Planning and Development to create a shared vision and plan for the 50<sup>th</sup> ward. In addition, I will create a TIF Oversight Board to approve the allocation and spending of funds from the four TIFs in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward.

## **PLANNING, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT**

5. a. How should business and commercial development be balanced with residential development in the ward?  
In the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, many residents have expressed frustration that development is taking place without their input, and renters are being priced out of the neighborhood by the development and rehabbing of condo buildings. To address these issues, I support the Balanced Development Ordinance, which would require developers of new residential buildings with 10 or more units to either: set aside 15% of the units as affordable; contribute \$100,000 to the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust; or build affordable housing units in a nearby area.

b. How should downtown development be balanced with community development throughout the city?  
Downtown development should not be advanced at the expense of neighborhood development in other parts of the city. While the past focus on loop development has enhanced the city's reputation and has attracted suburbanites to move back to the city, we must also prioritize other community areas that are struggling and desperately need revitalization.

6. a. In what ways will you assist in the positive development of neighborhood business areas  
I will also work in partnership with the West Ridge Chamber of Commerce to ensure that businesses get what they need to thrive in the ward. I will also fully participate in the ward's resident-based Community Planning Board, whose role will be to work with the City's Department of Planning and Development to develop a shared, comprehensive vision for the ward and to guide its implementation. This will include revitalization of the business areas and collaborative solutions for the parking and traffic problems surrounding Devon Avenue. For too long, development in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward has taken place without resident input. In fall 2006, the West Rogers Park Community Organization introduced a referendum to create the Community Planning Board, which I actively supported. The referendum overwhelmingly passed during the November 2006 election, and I look forward to being part of that process.

b. How will you involve ward residents in planning?  
As described above, I will actively participate in the Community Planning Board and I will create a TIF Oversight Board to approve and allocate the spending of TIF funds for the four TIFs in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward: Devon Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Pratt/Ridge, and Touhy/Western.

c. What is your long-range plan for the development of the ward?  
My priorities for the development of the ward include enabling Devon Avenue to realize its full potential as a thriving international marketplace, revitalizing the Touhy Avenue business district, and ensuring that housing remains affordable to renters as well as homeowners. I am also concerned about areas in which the architectural integrity of older buildings may be at risk. I will also ensure more transparency in the system by actively educating residents about the zoning and development process and how they can make their voices heard.

7. How do you intend to handle requests for zoning variances in your ward?  
For residential zoning variance requests, the current procedure is to submit an application to the Alderman's office, which must be approved by the resident's 2 adjacent neighbors before receiving final approval by the Alderman. I would continue this practice for variance requests that involve remodeling. However, for variance

requests involving teardowns, I would expand the community input provisions by informing the entire block in question and having the application discussed at a public meeting of the Community Planning Board. I would then weigh this discussion prior to approving the application. All commercial zoning variance requests would be directed to the Community Planning Board for discussion, and I would follow the Board's recommendations. All zoning variance requests would be posted in advance in my ward office and on my website.

8. a. What steps should be taken to achieve greater accountability and transparency in determining how TIF funds should be spent?

In the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, I support the creation of a TIF Oversight Board to ensure community input and public accountability into the process. As noted by the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, while TIF's were originally conceptualized as a means of improving Chicago's most distressed communities, they are increasingly being used in the Loop and other neighborhoods that are already developing at a healthy pace. In the 50<sup>th</sup> and other wards, residents have complained that aldermen are working behind the scenes with developers in planning TIFs, without sufficient input or discussion of how TIF funds should best be spent for the benefit of the neighborhood.

b. How will you involve residents in planning and approval of future TIF districts?

I strongly believe that residents should have a voice in the planning and approval of future TIF districts. Residents in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward have long been frustrated by the backroom TIF decisions made by the current alderman in conjunction with developers. In contrast, I will bring all TIF proposals before the Community Planning Board and will follow their recommendations.

c. Do you support terminating a TIF when the objectives of the TIF plan have been accomplished before the 23 year period is over?

I would consider terminating a TIF when the objectives of its TIF plan are accomplished prior to its 23-year period, but it depends on the overall needs of the neighborhood. TIF funds can be used in creative ways to assist the community, including providing day care, job training, and building schools, and this should be part of the consideration.

d. Do you support extending the South Loop TIF? Why or why not?

I would not support extending the South Loop TIF at this time, because steady economic growth is already occurring in the South Loop and it does not seem to necessitate a TIF expansion.

9. How do you propose to replace property tax revenue for CPS and other taxing bodies that is lost to TIF development?

It should be noted that TIF funds can be used for school construction and repairs, and I will be an advocate for utilizing TIF funds in this way. However, during the first years of a TIF, sufficient funds will not be available for such projects. To replace funds lost to the TIF development, I would support the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability's proposal to modestly increase personal income tax and the sales tax base, while creating a tax credit for low-income families.

10. a. Did you support or would you have supported the Big Box/Living Wage Ordinance?

Yes, I would certainly have supported the Big Box/Living Wage Ordinance.

b. Why or why not?

According to the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, the city of Chicago has given \$62 million in TIF subsidies to Big Box retailers. Of this, nearly \$5 million in TIF subsidies was given for the redevelopment of the Lincoln Village Shopping Center in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, some of which went toward development costs for a Borders bookstore. If the city of Chicago is giving subsidies to Big Box retailers, then we absolutely must require them to give a living wage and health care benefits to their employees.

c. What changes, if any, would you support if the Ordinance were introduced again?

The ordinance as it was originally introduced was a strong one, and I would not recommend any changes at this time.

d. Would you support any kind of municipal living wage ordinance?

Yes, I would support a municipal living wage ordinance. It is important to continue to fight for higher standards of living and good jobs for all Chicagoans. I would expand the 1998 municipal living wage ordinance to include more job classifications that affect more city departments.

## HOUSING

11. Please comment on the housing problems in your ward.

There is a growing need for more affordable rental housing in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, where residents have expressed concern that new condo developments are starting to push out long-time renters. This is largely affecting senior citizens and single-parent families, who are particularly vulnerable.

12. How will you increase low-income rental housing and home ownership opportunities that would be affordable to those at 15%-30% of AMI?

To increase low-income rental housing, I will fight for the Balanced Development Ordinance that was introduced by Ald. Toni Preckwinkle, which requires developers of new residential buildings with 10 or more units to either: set aside 15% of the units as affordable; contribute \$100,000 to the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust; or build affordable housing units in a nearby area. Also, another effective measure is to ensure that any new development which requires a zoning change also includes a specific set-aside for affordable housing – a measure I will implement as alderman. In addition, I will work with organizations such as Fannie Mae and the Chicago Federal Home Loan Bank to provide educational forums for residents regarding home ownership assistance and resources.

13. a. Do you support one-for-one replacement of each unit of demolished subsidized housing, even though Federal law no longer requires it?

Yes, I support one-for-one replacement of each unit of demolished subsidized housing. With the current decline in the economy, there continues to be a great need for subsidized housing. If we do not replace each unit of subsidized housing, we are in effect pushing low-income families out of the city of Chicago instead of trying to address a city-wide shortage of affordable housing.

b. What should be done to provide housing for those families displaced from public housing and not eligible for relocation under the CHA transformation plan?

Families who were displaced from public housing who are ineligible for relocation under the CHA transformation plan may be ineligible because they were displaced prior to October 1, 1999 or non-compliant with their lease during the relocation/rebuilding process. Regardless of what their circumstances may be, these families still need housing and opportunities to better their situations, and they should be referred to housing and employment assistance organizations for counseling, job training, and other resources that may be needed. In addition, as described above in question 12, I support the Balanced Development Ordinance which would ensure the creation of new affordable housing.

c. How should the transformation plan be amended to adequately provide for the needs of low income people with disabilities?

Advocates for people with disabilities are concerned that CHA does not sufficiently monitor new construction or rehabbing to assure that enough units are made accessible, and even after the construction/rehab has been completed, CHA listings usually do not include information on which units are accessible to people with

disabilities. These are simple recommendations that should be followed, in order to provide basic information to low-income people with disabilities.

d. What should be done to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable family sized units available to families in the Section 8 program?  
More landlords, especially those located in higher economic opportunity neighborhoods, should be actively encouraged to participate in the Section 8 program. This could best occur through a combination of participation incentives and regulation/enforcement. Potential incentives could include a holding fee (paying a fee to participating landlord) or eligibility for special low-interest or no-interest loans for building rehab or improvements. In terms of regulation and enforcement, the city's housing code currently prohibits discrimination based on source of income, and there should be active community outreach to ensure that Section 8 tenants know their rights and are able to file complaints. In addition, the city could consider a rental property licensing program that would include Section 8 participation as one of the licensure criteria (in addition to various safety and building inspections). Landlords who consistently fail the licensure criteria would have to pay fines and ultimately would be forced to sell their buildings; the city could establish a right of first refusal process that allows community-oriented buyers a chance to purchase these properties.

e. What should be done to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals and families who are not served by any existing programs?  
To increase affordable housing for low-income individuals and families who are not currently served by any program, I will fight for the Balanced Development Ordinance that was introduced by Ald. Toni Preckwinkle, which requires developers of new residential buildings with 10 or more units to either: set aside 15% of the units as affordable; contribute \$100,000 to the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust; or build affordable housing units in a nearby area. I would also advocate to ensure that any new development which requires a zoning change also includes an affordable housing set-aside.

14. Do you support halfway houses and shelters for the homeless in your ward?  
I will support halfway houses and shelters for the homeless in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward. Currently, the ward has numerous residences for populations with special needs and assisted living, and this would continue the 50<sup>th</sup> ward's tradition of inclusion, community service, and diversity.

15. a. Do you think Chicago's Tenants' Rights Ordinance is being adequately implemented?  
I believe that many renters, particularly those who are recent immigrants, are not adequately informed of their rights under the Chicago Tenants' Rights Ordinance. And, in many cases, they do not feel empowered to seek assistance or enforce their rights.

b. What changes, if any, should be made?  
As Alderman, I would invite organizations such as the Metropolitan Tenants' Organization to present informational forums in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, so that renters can be fully informed of their rights and where to turn for assistance. To ensure that immigrant communities can also benefit from this information, I would work with community-based organizations to translate brochures and other materials and disseminate this to renters in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward.

16. a. Do you support an inclusionary zoning ordinance which would require developers to set aside 15% of residential new construction or renovation for the creation of affordable housing?  
Yes, I would support such an ordinance. This is an important mechanism for ensuring that the 50<sup>th</sup> ward and the city of Chicago remains open to all families regardless of income.

## **EDUCATION**

17. a. How will you work to ease overcrowding and improve the quality of public schools and after school recreational activities?

Two out of the six elementary schools in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward are currently overcrowded. I strongly support the efforts that are currently underway to build a new school in the ward, and I support using TIF funds for this purpose. As Alderman, I would designate a staffperson in my service office to identify supplemental grants and other resources, and facilitate a roundtable with school principals to build partnerships to improve school programs. In addition, I would seek local transportation resources to bring students to Warren Park to participate in their currently underutilized afterschool recreational programs.

b. How will you work to improve maintenance and rehab of aging schools?

An Alderman's role includes advocating for vital ward needs during the budget process, and I would fight for city and state funds to support school maintenance and rehab. In addition, as described above, I would advocate for using TIF funds for this purpose. Dilapidated schools contribute to a poor learning environment, and it is critical for us to maintain and rehab our public schools.

18. Do you support a city-wide lottery for enrollment in magnet schools?

Currently, some magnet schools require admission testing and have no lottery, while the majority require only an application and utilize the lottery system. There are three types of lotteries: sibling, proximity, and general. Because magnet schools are not evenly distributed throughout the city, I would support a city-wide lottery that combines the proximity and general pools of applicants.

19. a. What is your assessment of Renaissance 2010 and its implementation in your ward as well as the City as a whole? Please include in your assessment, the role of charter schools as well as the power to reconstitute schools.

I have serious concerns about Renaissance 2010, including the impact of school closings as well as the expansion of charter schools and school reconstitution. First, I support a resolution for a Moratorium on School Closings, which requires CPS to provide a thorough report on how children from the closed schools are doing, before any more schools are closed. We must also understand what the criteria are for these closings, and without full disclosure of these criteria and decisions, parents and teachers will lose their confidence in the public school system. Second, I am very concerned that the charter schools and reconstituted schools, unlike CPS local schools, will not be required to work with the teachers' unions. We need to support our teachers and I would advocate for the management of these charter and reconstituted schools to remain neutral and to allow their teachers to organize and join a union if they so desire.

b. At what level of government should decisions be made regarding allocation of Chapter One funds?

Chapter One funds were designated by the federal government for the special education needs of children with disabilities. Currently, as I understand it, each school principal is responsible for the spending of Chapter One funds. At the same time, the LSCs are responsible for overseeing and monitoring each school's budget and expenses. I would recommend that the LSCs receive education on this topic so that they can be more active in ensuring that Chapter One funds are being appropriately spent for the direct benefit of students with disabilities.

c. How would you change the selection and approval process for the mayor's appointments to the Board of Education?

Currently, the Mayor selects and appoints members of the Board of Education without any meaningful mechanism for community input or accountability. Given the vital role of our public schools, it is imperative that Board members have appropriate qualifications and can knowledgeably represent the concerns of our diverse communities. I would recommend that Board members be directly elected by voters at large or by members of the school community (including teachers and LSC members). A proportionate number of Board members should come from each of the Chicago Public Schools' three zones to ensure that the voices of all of our schools and students are being heard.

20. What should the City do to improve the quality of all local schools?

To improve the quality of all local schools, the City should ensure that: capital improvements for schools are prioritized and funded; overcrowding is alleviated by the building of new schools and school expansions; effective principals and teachers are recruited and retained; LSC members receive adequate training and orientation regarding their roles; and that school partnerships with the private sector are encouraged.

21. What are your plans to improve the local schools in your ward?

I will designate a staffperson to identify grants and other outside resources that can supplement local schools' programs and budgets and give parents the tools and knowledge to support their children's education. I will convene an educational roundtable with principals to discuss these resources and build partnerships to strengthen our local schools. In addition, I will encourage parents in the ward to participate in LSCs by publicizing LSC information and meeting times in my service office, newsletters, and website. Also, I will partner with high schools in the area by offering service learning opportunities in my service office.

## ENVIRONMENT

22. As Blue Bag recycling is phased out and replaced with point separation, what steps should be taken to  
a. ensure participation of small businesses and non-profits in the recycling program?

As Alderman, I would work with local and ethnic Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations to hold forums and conduct mailings to small businesses to fully educate them about the current recycling program, including specific steps for compliance and benefits to their businesses and consumers. Many of our business owners are active in faith communities, and I will emphasize that the principles of recycling and regeneration are consistent with those of many religious faiths. Similarly, I would reach out to non-profit organizations in the ward to share this information.

b. identify adequate markets for recycled materials?

To identify markets for recycled materials, the city should reach out to local recycling leaders and advocates for initial recommendations. This charge could be given to the City's committee on Energy, Environmental Protection, and Public Utilities.

23. What should the City do to encourage and implement alternative forms of energy?

I strongly support environmentally friendly initiatives. The City should encourage the use of alternative forms of energy use by offering incentives to developers for incorporating green design in new buildings or rehabs. In addition, the City Council's Committee on Energy, Environmental Protection and Public Utilities should further explore this topic and devise recommendations on implementing alternative energy widely throughout the city.

## PARKS

24. a. Do you support increased privatization of facilities and services?

I do not support increased privatization of park facilities and services at this time; as described above, privatization should only be considered when there are documented significant cost savings or specific expertise that city employees cannot provide.

b. Have the court decrees mandating equal park services in both programs and capital improvements been adequately achieved in your ward?

I am continuing to research this topic to become better informed.

c. How have cuts in the park district budget affected parks in your ward?

Budget cuts have led to a decline in maintenance in local parks including Indian Boundary Park and Warren Park.

25. Do you believe Chicago's park system is adequately funded?

I believe that funds designated for Chicago's park system are not always being used in an effective manner, and I am continuing to research this topic to become better informed.

26. Do you support siting the main/opening Olympic venue in Washington Park?

I am continuing to research this topic in order to make a more informed recommendation.

## TRANSPORTATION

27. a. What will you do to expand CTA services to more neighborhoods?

As Alderman, I will actively support measures to expand the CTA's Red Line in the South Side and I will advocate for improving the frequency and timeliness of bus service to the 50<sup>th</sup> ward. On the South Side, the CTA stops five miles short of the Chicago border, leaving those who live south of 95<sup>th</sup> street without transportation essential to accessing other parts of the city. Many people in the city live and work without a car. Our public transportation system continues to need real improvements so that those without cars can reliably commute to their jobs and have full access to the city's resources.

b. Is CTA service sufficient in your ward?

No; currently, there are no CTA train lines in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, and residents are frustrated with long waiting times for CTA bus lines, including the Lunt and Western Avenue lines. In addition, on Kedzie Avenue, residents have complained about the lack of bus shelters to protect them from inclement weather.

c. Should the City increase its subsidy to the CTA?

I am continuing to research this topic in order to make a more informed recommendation.

28. In what situations would you support permit parking?

I would support permit parking in high-density residential areas in which the majority of residents agree that it is necessary. I support the City Council's recent changes to create parking permits for social workers and home health care workers who are providing vital services, but not for real estate agents.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

29. a. Is response time adequate in 911 service?

For the most part, 911 response time in Chicago seems to be adequate, but we should continue to strive for improvement. A delay in responding to even one emergency call is one delay too many; the safety of our city's residents and visitors is of the highest priority. I am also concerned about the 50<sup>th</sup> ward's multilingual residents who may have difficulty using the 911 system.

b. Are there inequities in 911 service in your ward? If so, what can be done to redress them?

Through our outreach to CAPS leaders and community residents, I have yet not heard of any inequities in 911 service in the 50<sup>th</sup> ward.

30. a. Do you support community policing?

Yes, I am a strong supporter of community policing and I will actively promote resident participation in the CAPS program.

b. What improvements would you suggest for this program?

In the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, many residents are concerned about safety issues in their neighborhoods, yet they are often unaware of the CAPS program or how community policing can help them. As Alderman, I would work with the CAPS program to actively outreach to all parts of the ward to ensure that they know how the CAPS program

works, how they can contact their Beat officers, and how they can get involved. I will be an active partner in encouraging more participation from ethnically diverse business owners and residents.

31. Should the City stop paying legal fees and attempt to recover past legal costs of city employees implicated in the Police Board findings of misconduct related to the Burge case?

The Burge case is appalling not only because of the extreme physical and psychological harm inflicted upon the torture victims, but also because of the length of time that passed between the initial allegations and the eventual firing of Burge and the charges pressed against other implicated officers. The City should maintain and enforce a consistent policy regarding legal fees and costs relating to city employees who are implicated in the Burge case as well as any other misconduct cases. Under our justice system, all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty by a jury of their peers. Thus, the City's law department should continue to defend city employees who are accused of misconduct relating to their city employment. However, employees who are subsequently found guilty should be required to reimburse the city for at least a portion of the legal fees that were incurred. These employees have not only harmed individuals or groups, but they have also damaged the reputation of the city, and taxpayers should not be made to bear the entire burden of their legal defense.

32. Please share your views regarding the functioning of the Office of Professional Standards and whether it should operate more independently of the Police Department.

I believe that the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) is currently limited in its ability to hold police officers accountable for their actions, and this has undermined the public's trust in our police officers, as well as in OPS. In order to be truly effective, OPS should operate more independently of the Police Department.

## **REVENUE AND BUDGET**

33. Do you favor a budget ordinance which would require:

- a. public questioning of city department heads concerning their departments' specific budget requests?
- b. budget copies available to the public 30 days in advance of hearings?
- c. restoring city-wide community group budget hearings several months prior to the publication of the budget, as were held under the Washington and Sawyer administrations?

Yes, I would enthusiastically support a budget ordinance that would require all of the above three measures. I am an advocate for open and transparent city government, and this includes transparency and public participation in the budget process. Taxpayers have every right to know how their tax dollars are being allocated and spent, and they should have input into the process.

34. a. Do you support casino gambling for Chicago?

It depends. Although casinos may generate more jobs and tax revenue, they also prey on the vulnerability of middle and low income people. Its important to create revenue and jobs through other types of industries such as hospitality and tourism first, building upon our city's strengths as an architectural, historic, artistic, and family friendly place to visit, before turning to casino gaming.

b. Would you support a citywide referendum before any gambling is instituted in the City?

For the above reasons, yes, I would definitely support such a referendum.

35. What level of city support do you favor for the arts and cultural events?

Our public arts and cultural events help to make Chicago a world-class city. We should continue to maintain staffing to organize these events, making them available to all residents and visitors regardless of their income level.

36. Do you support

- a. rescinding the recent Mayoral and Aldermanic salary increases?

Yes, I support rescinding the salary increases. Given our current city budget, it is inappropriate for these salary increases to take place.

b. limiting Mayoral and Aldermanic salary increases to the same percentage as the lowest raise for any class of city employees?

Yes, I would support limiting the salary increases to the same percentage as the lowest raise for any class of city employees. To be fiscally responsible, our Mayor and City Council members should receive the same increases as other city workers.

37. Do you support increasing the number of staff positions for aldermanic service offices?

Given the current constraints of the city budget, I would not support increasing the number of staff positions for aldermanic service offices, but I would recruit college student interns and seek high school students from the ward who could earn service learning credits. In the 50<sup>th</sup> ward, many residents have been frustrated by slow response and/or rude treatment from staff in the current alderman's office. As Alderman, I would make customer service a high priority and I will hire staff based on their qualifications and performance rather than their connections to friends and family.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

38. a. What reforms are necessary in the City Council's committee structure?

The City Council committees need to be activated so that they can properly carry out their functions. All Committees should be required to meet regularly and to make their meetings, attendance, votes, and proceedings available and accessible to the public. At the very least, each Committee should produce a year-end report that summarizes their proposed ordinances and their outcomes.

b. Do you favor keeping the current number of committees?

I am in favor of keeping the current number of committees at this time, but as described above, the committees must be made active and their meetings and proceedings must be made fully accessible and available to the public.

39. a. Do you support a rule requiring the numbering of proposed City ordinances?

Yes, I would support such a rule because it will make it easier for the public to track the status of proposed ordinances.

b. Do you support a rule requiring all city council proceedings to be transcribed verbatim and published by the City Clerk?

Yes, I would support such a rule. As noted above, I am an advocate for open and transparent government that is fully accountable to those who elect us. This includes making City Council proceedings fully accessible to the public.

c. Do you support mandating the Clerk's office to provide copies of pending ordinances to the public upon request?

Yes, I support such a mandate. Pending ordinances should also be made easily accessible via the Clerk's website.

d. Do you support a rule requiring roll call votes?

Yes, I support such a rule. Residents have a right to know how their City Council representatives have voted for the record.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

40. a. Do you support affirmative action based on race, gender and sexual orientation in establishing criteria for hiring and promoting public employees?

Yes, I am a strong supporter of affirmative action in hiring and promoting public employees. Our city government should reflect the diversity of its residents, and there are many talented and highly qualified individuals from all of our diverse communities who could bring expertise to city departments. The city of Chicago should recognize the existence of racism and discrimination and should embrace affirmative action measures as a matter of social justice.

b. Do you support affirmative action as a criteria in letting city contracts?

Yes, I strongly support affirmative action as one of several criteria in letting city contracts. Historically, minority and women-owned businesses have faced discrimination in city contracting, and affirmative action is simply a means of remedying this past discrimination.

c. Please comment on current women and minority participation in city hiring and contracts. Be sure your comments include firefighter and police officer recruitment and promotion.

Women and minority participation in city hiring and city contracts has increased over the years because of the city's affirmative action policies, but there needs to be regular monitoring of both hiring and contracts by city department, to identify specific departments or divisions in which we have made progress and as well as those which need targeted improvement. The City Council should play an active role in monitoring and oversight, to hold all of our departments accountable.

To increase the participation of minority contractors specifically, I would work with procurement services to develop financial programs that would increase their working capital. Additionally, Asian American contractors have been shut out of the minority business classification, and I would fight to re-include Asian American contractors in these programs.

Affirmative action in firefighter and police officer recruitment and promotion programs have recently been a focus of controversy, but I strongly believe that our fire and police departments should proportionately reflect the communities that they serve. Affirmative action programs should absolutely continue in the fire and police departments, and this includes ensuring and enforcing non-discrimination policies in the workplace.

41. Do you favor restructuring the wage scale of city employees to institute gender-equal pay for jobs of comparable worth?

I am most definitely in favor of restructuring the wage scale of city employees to institute gender-equal pay for jobs of comparable worth. When I worked for city government, I discovered that women in my division were being paid substantially less than our male counterparts. We took this issue to management and an extremely lengthy process ensued. Only when we began to take measures to file a lawsuit, did the department agree to institute pay equity for women.

42. Do you support requiring all City vendors to provide spousal benefits for same-sex partners of their employees?

Yes, I would strongly support this measure and would fight to ensure equal rights for members of the LGBT community. City vendors should provide the same benefits for their employees' same-sex partners as they do for their employees' spouses.

## **ETHICS & CAMPAIGNING**

43. Do you support patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?

No, I certainly do not support patronage in hiring and promoting public employees. To ensure that our city's residents receive the best quality services, we should hire and promote city employees based on their qualifications, not on the basis of their political clout or relationships.

44. Do you support the Accountability in Privatization Ordinance?

Yes, I support the Accountability in Privatization Ordinance, which would require: detailed studies to be conducted prior to any privatization initiative; projected cost savings over 10%; a competitive bidding process; staff hiring in accordance with the Shakman decree; wage levels comparable to that of city employees; and at least 50% of work hours performed by city residents.

45. In what circumstances should the City contract for outside professional services? Please comment on any existing abuses.

In accordance with the Accountability in Privatization Ordinance, the City should only contract for outside professional services when documented cost savings would be over 10% of the service or if the services cannot be feasibly performed by City employees.

46. Would you support contracting for outside services with companies located outside Chicago? Why or why not?

I would support contracting with companies outside Chicago only in instances where specialized expertise is required that is unavailable from city companies or when a neutral, unbiased perspective is needed that may not be available from firms based in the city of Chicago.

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

No, I will not.

b. 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 City?

No, I will not.

48. Will you or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers or employees?

My campaign has received donations from over 300 individuals, and some of them may be interested in applying for staff positions if I am elected. As Alderman, I will make hiring decisions based on applicants' qualifications for staff positions, regardless of whether or not they have contributed to my campaign. Similarly, purchasing decisions will be based on cost and quality, not on the basis of past campaign support.

49. Do you support extending all of the provisions of the City Ethics Ordinance to City Council members?

Yes, I support extending all of the provisions of the City Ethics Ordinance to City Council members. As an advocate for transparent and accountable government, I believe that City Council members should be held to the same ethical standards as other city employees.

50. Do you support expanding the jurisdiction of the City Inspector General to include City Council members?

Yes, I fully support expanding the jurisdiction of the City Inspector General to include City Council members. Our City Council should be fully accountable to the public and this includes empowering the Inspector General to investigate any complaints or concerns regarding City Council members.

51. Do you support public financing of municipal campaigns? Please explain your position.

Yes, I strongly support public financing of municipal campaigns. Public campaign financing would give a fair chance to new challengers while also reducing the influence of special interests.

52. Who are your top 5 contributors and how much has each contributed to your campaign?

My top 5 contributors are:

Naisy Dolar	\$10,000.00
New Democracy Fund	\$9,500.00
Aurora Abella-Austriaco	\$1,500.00

Israel	Desierto	\$1,500.00
Ben	Lumicao	\$1,500.00

53. Are you supporting any mayoral candidate?  
No, I am not supporting any mayoral candidate.