

WINDY CITY TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Aldermanic races

Return responses by fax (773-871-7609), regular mail (Windy City Times, c/o Andrew Davis, 5315 N. Clark, #192, Chicago, Ill., 60640) or e-mail (Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com). Call 773-871-7610, ext. 201, if questions arise.

DEADLINE: Friday, Jan. 9, 2015, by 5 p.m. LATE RESPONSES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Please feel free to use additional paper as needed.

YOUR NAME: Bita Buenrostro INCUMBENT? YES/NO NO
OFFICE SOUGHT: Alderman WARD (if appropriate): 2

1) Do you have or would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination? _____

Please see attached pages for all answers.

2) Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT-related issues? _____

3) Have you taken or would you take any steps to further HIV/AIDS treatment and education programs? If so, what are those measures? _____

4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law?

5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?

6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)? _____

7) Do you favor hate-crimes legislation that increases penalties for crimes committed based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person attacked? _____

8) Do you believe LGBTs should become foster parents if they are qualified? _____

9) Do you believe LGBTs have the right to adopt children if they are qualified? _____

10) Would you keep committees such as the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT Issues? _____

11) What are your thoughts on a school that would be designed specifically for LGBT students, much like the Harvey Milk School in New York City?

12) Would you advocate for mandatory anti-bullying policies/training in Chicago public schools?

13) Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive history education in Chicago public schools starting in middle school? _____

14) Would you advocate for mandatory comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive and age-appropriate sex education in Chicago public schools starting in middle school? _____

15) What would you recommend to have a better relationship between police and the citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?

16) If you are an incumbent, did you vote for the recent increase in the city's minimum wage and, if a challenger, would you have? Also, what do you think is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?

17) How do you propose to handle the crime rate in Chicago, especially in minority neighborhoods? _____

18) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing your ward? How do you propose to tackle that problem?

19) Some studies show that 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ. What would you do to provide more resources for prevention, education and services for the entire homeless youth population? _____

20) New York City eliminated barriers to transgender people changing their birth certificates. They just need a letter from a doctor to do so. Would you support this for Chicago? _____

21) Are any members of your current staff—either campaign or general office personnel—openly LGBT? _____

22) Please list any and all experience you have on LGBT-related issues.

23) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing the LGBT community today?

- 1) Do you have or would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination? **Yes, my office will be professional and I will have such a policy. In my work in the private sector, I have helped to design policies for my company.**
- 2) Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT-related issues? **Yes, respect in the workplace will be required from all staff.**
- 3) Have you taken or would you take any steps to further HIV/AIDS treatment and education programs? If so, what are those measures? **I would support efforts in schools, public health programs, and the City Division of STI/HIV/AIDS to best allocate resources to educate our residents about prevention and treatment options.**
- 4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law? **Abortions, as performed by the medical profession under ethical guidelines are legal and are clearly a women's health issue. I will not support any new legal restrictions on abortion.**
- 5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education? **As noted on question 3, I support efforts to educate and treat, and I will pursue funding for education and treatment from multiple levels, municipal, state, federal, and private entities.**
- 6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)? **Yes, in fact in my private-sector job as a restaurant executive, one of our restaurant sites recently gave a party to an employee who married his partner. I fully support marriage equality.**
- 7) Do you favor hate-crimes legislation that increases penalties for crimes committed based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person attacked? **Yes, crimes motivated by gender identity are hate crimes and should be prosecuted as such.**
- 8) Do you believe LGBTs should become foster parents if they are qualified? **Yes**
- 9) Do you believe LGBTs have the right to adopt children if they are qualified? **Yes**
- 10) Would you keep committees such as the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT Issues? **Yes**
- 11) What are your thoughts on a school that would be designed specifically for LGBT students, much like the Harvey Milk School in New York City? **I would support an effort to bring a similar school to Chicago.**
- 12) Would you advocate for mandatory anti-bullying policies/training in Chicago public schools? **Yes**
- 13) Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive history education in Chicago public schools starting in middle school? **Yes**
- 14) Would you advocate for mandatory comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive and age-appropriate sex education in Chicago public schools starting in middle school? **Yes**
- 15) What would you recommend to have a better relationship between police and the citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community? **This is an important question to me, my husband is a decorated CPD officer of 19 years. All members of our community deserve access to police and safety services. Our CPD lead the world in the areas of community outreach, training, domestic violence prevention, and safe tactics. I support stronger community programs such as CAPS as well as appropriate training for our police force.**
- 16) If you are an incumbent, did you vote for the recent increase in the city's minimum wage and, if a challenger, would you have? Also, what do you think is the ideal minimum wage for the City of Chicago? **I would have supported the recent increase. I support a gradual increase over time to the \$15 level.**

- 17) How do you propose to handle the crime rate in Chicago, especially in minority neighborhoods? **I believe that residents can help by starting neighborhood watches and block watches, I know that these work and I have started them myself. I also know that economic development lowers crime, because a boarded-up store cannot call the police, but merchant can and will. After school programs and youth outreach and mentoring will also help. Fundamentally, we also need more trained 'beat cops' on the street that are a part of the community, reflect the community, and know the residents and businesses.**
- 18) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing your ward? How do you propose to tackle that problem? **I feel that our 2nd Ward does not receive our fair share of city services, including safety and streets and san. We also must push for economic growth and good schools. I will work with city departments and local safety workers to make sure that we receive the services that we have paid for with our tax dollars. I will also foster economic growth through good zoning decisions (especially the Finkl Steel site) and outreach to small businesses and other employers. For schools, I will work to promote mentoring and after-school programs.**
- 19) Some studies show that 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ. What would you do to provide more resources for prevention, education and services for the entire homeless youth population? **The best prevention is an accepting and welcoming home and school environment so that youth do not feel the need to leave and feel welcomed home if they do leave. I will ensure that our police and city workers on the streets know the best method to assist homeless, and I will work with the city community service centers (DFSS) and other organizations to make sure that they too have the methods and tools needed. Finally, I will ask local merchants to declare and label themselves as "safe zones" for LGBTQ individuals.**
- 20) New York City eliminated barriers to transgender people changing their birth certificates. They just need a letter from a doctor to do so. Would you support this for Chicago? **Yes.**
- 21) Are any members of your current staff, either campaign or general office personnel-openly LGBT? **Yes, I have staff in my private-sector job that are openly LGBT, and I have volunteers in our Ward office that are openly LGBT.**
- 22) Please list any and all experience you have on LGBT-related issues. **As noted earlier, I helped my private-sector company build a policy on LGBT issues, we do not discriminate, and we expect respect for both our employees and our patrons. I personally have seen what discrimination based on factors such as race can do; gender discrimination is no different than that. I am committed to ensure that others do not experience discrimination based on their orientation.**
- 23) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing the LGBT community today? **The LGBT community has made great strides in the past few years, both socially and legally, including the end of DADT and legalized marriage in 35 states. There will always still be small pockets of intolerance, so I feel that we should continue to push for social acceptance by instituting progressive policies in workplaces. I also feel that the medical needs (AIDS) are still a large challenge and should continue to be addressed.**