

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). Feel free to 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: **Brian Hopkins**
OFFICE SOUGHT: **Alderman**

INCUMBENT? **NO**
WARD (if appropriate): **2nd**

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

Yes. If elected I will post written policy in my ward and city office, to make it clear that I have a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination of any kind.

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

Yes. If elected it will be part of my office orientation

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

As a senior advisor to Cook County Commissioner John Daley, I have worked closely with him for many years in his role as Chairman of the Board of the CORE Foundation. The CORE Foundation's mission is to support the Ruth Rothstein CORE Center, the nation's premier AIDS treatment and education facility right here in Chicago. The CORE Center is a model AIDS education and outreach center around the world. I am proud of my work in a staff role to support the ongoing effort to help the CORE Center to fight AIDS and to bring treatment with dignity to an at-risk population without regard to their ability to pay.

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

I am a strong supporter of Roe v. Wade, and believe fully in a woman's right to make a private choice.

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

In addition to my work with CORE Foundation, I am a strong supporter of the outstanding work performed at the Center on Halsted. Congressman Mike Quigley,

a key supporter of the Center on Halsted, has endorsed my candidacy in part because of my commitment to funding for HIV/AIDS treatment, education, and research.

6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)?
Yes. In addition to that, I supported a Domestic partner registry in Cook County Government in 2003 – in advance of the approval of same-gender marriage in Illinois. I was also a supporter of insurance benefit equity to allow same-gender partners to be named as co-beneficiaries in the years before marriage equality became law. I am not new to this fight.

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

8) Do you believe that LGBT individuals should become foster parents if they are qualified?
Yes

9) Do you believe that LGBT individuals have the right to adopt children if they are qualified?
Yes

10) Would you keep committees around such as the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender 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 will support it, yes. I favor the Harvey Milk School, but this does not absolve existing Chicago Public Schools of their responsibility to protect students who become targets of bullying.

12) Would you advocate for mandatory anti-bullying policies/training in Chicago public schools?
Yes – see #11

13) Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive 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?

I support providing additional community relations training to CPD officers, so that they better understand the diverse communities that make up Chicago. More patrol officers on the street may deter crime, but if the patrol officers take the time to get to know the communities they serve, a better bond and trust can be established. Through that trust and bond, a better understanding of the community occurs.

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 voted yes on the 2014 minimum wage referendum to support raising the Illinois minimum wage because employees deserve to make a fair wage. I believe that the state legislature should be the governing body to pass a bill that establishes a uniform minimum wage for all Illinois families. Having varying minimum wage rates across multiple jurisdictions is confusing and unfair to employees across the state. I would have voted no on the recent minimum wage ordinance.

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

Chicago needs to hire more police officers. Current patrol officers are working countless hours of overtime. Hiring more officers would reduce the skyrocketing overtime paid out. I'd like to see more patrol officers engaging in true community policing – in that they're out of the car, talking to neighbors, and learning about the businesses and residences they're protecting in their sector. Public-police interaction will help mend the hole in the public's trust of the police department and its statistics. Building a relationship with the neighborhood by being physically present can help mend the relationship on the block, getting police farther in cleaning up the root of crime in our communities across Chicago.

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

Residents of the 2nd Ward shoulder a huge burden of the property tax paid to the city treasury, but receive far less in public benefits and city services. It's unfair and wrong for residents in this Ward to be the financial heart of the cities' tax base.

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?

I'd work to secure funding for CPS to place crisis intervention staff in high schools

with high rates of dropouts and truancy. I'd also like to see stronger collaboration between Child Protective Services, CPS and the Cook County Sheriff to coordinate on family reunification when students end up in the juvenile justice system. I have significant experience on this issue from my former work as Director of the Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness.

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?

No

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

While at Cook County, I helped draft the 2003 Domestic Partner Registry policy. It allowed county employees to name a partner as a beneficiary for insurance and other benefits from the county, regardless of sexual orientation or marital status – so long as both parties signed an affidavit declaring they were in a committed relationship and shared financial and emotional support to remain in the relationship.

I supported and served as a key personal adviser to current Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore when she first ran for the position.

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

Our LGBT neighbors want the same thing that every Chicagoan wants: safer streets, better schools, ending any and all discrimination policies and practices, and opportunities to live a comfortable life. It's a matter of helping educate others understand and look beyond the label of the LGBT and realize that the community is comprised of people that share the same hopes, dreams, and desires of the community as a whole.