

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: Deb Mell INCUMBENT? YES/NO yes
OFFICE SOUGHT: Alderman WARD (if appropriate): 33rd Ward

- 1) Do you have or would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination? yes
- 2) Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT-related issues? yes
- 3) Have you taken or would you take any steps to further HIV/AIDS treatment and education programs? If so, what are those measures? yes
- 4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law?
I believe in the right to choose when or whether to have an abortion without government intrusion.
- 5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?
I am in support for funding of HIV/AIDS treatment and education.
- 6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)? yes
- 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 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 believe a school for LGBT students would be beneficial for the ~~rooms~~ ^{students} and especially the most vulnerable, but we also need to make sure these students feel safe in the public schools we already have.
- 12) Would you advocate for mandatory anti-bullying policies/training in Chicago public schools?
Yes, I would.
- 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?

Police need to be active in attending community meetings and residents need to be attending CAPS meeting in order to keep communication. Residents + police can also begin neighborhood watches to keep watch on neighborhood streets with community involvement.

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?

Yes, I did vote in favor of the city's minimum wage increase.

I believe the ideal minimum wage would be \$15/hour.

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

I think preserving and increasing current policing efforts and bringing resources to schools + parks to provide after school youth programs in the community can help keep crime at a minimum.

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

I believe improving neighborhood schools is the biggest priority.

The key is to encourage parents to be involved, teachers should be engaged and administrators need to be responsive.

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 understand what it's like to not feel acceptance in the community and what it comes down to is finding funding for programs to support the homeless as well as family and community support, which I will advocate for.

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? My Field Director and Assistant to the Alderman.

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

I voted for Civil Unions while State Rep. and I worked tirelessly for marriage equality in Illinois.

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

General acceptance in society. Although the LGBT

community has made progress with this, they still are not accepted fully in society.