

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: Omar Aquino INCUMBENT? YES/NO No
OFFICE SOUGHT: Alderman WARD (if appropriate): 36th Ward

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

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

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 happily promote such programs once I am elected alderman.

4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law?
I am 100% pro-choice

5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?
I believe that funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education is a necessity, and if there are deficiencies in funding I will gladly work to see that it is increased.

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 would want to see studies on their effectiveness, but if they are supported by the LGBT community, I will support such a school.

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?

I think we should look at sensitivity training and other elements of officer training to make sure that our public safety officers have an understanding and can relate to the communities they serve.

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 would have voted for it. I think the ideal minimum wage is the \$15/hour wage that was proposed by the Progressive Caucus.

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

I will strongly advocate for hiring more police, and I will support whatever budgetary methods are necessary (including revenue) to make it happen. I also support looking into innovative community-based crime reduction methods as a way to handle Chicago's crime rate.

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

There are many issues that my ward faces, but economic development is a major issue. Many working and middle-class jobs that once existed in the 36th Ward are now gone. I propose a comprehensive study of our business and manufacturing corridors, to figure out what incentives work and what don't, so we can leverage our incentives in the best way possible to bring new good-paying jobs to the community.

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 would take a look at the city's social services budget and, along with recommendations from the LGBTQ community, work to find ways to provide more city resources and support for these services.

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 - my field director.

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

During my time as Outreach Coordinator for Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth, and as a legislative aide for pro-marriage equality State Representative Toni Berrios, I spent time on LGBT issues of importance to the communities in those respective districts - especially during the fight for the passage of marriage equality.

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

As I am not a member of the LGBT community, I feel that the community and its organizations should be the ones to tell me the answer to this question — I will always be an open and friendly ear and voice for their concerns.