

YOUR NAME: **Margaret Laurino**
INCUMBENT?: **Yes**
OFFICE SOUGHT: **Alderman**
WARD: **39**

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

My office strictly adheres to the City of Chicago's Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, which through Chicago's municipal code and Human Rights Ordinance, prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in addition to race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, marital status, etc.

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

I am proud to have a staff that is responsive and respectful of all those who seek assistance through my office. Providing quality public service to all the residents of 39th Ward has always been my highest priority. I am always looking for ways to improve and would be open to sensitivity training for myself and my staff regarding LGBT-issues so that we can deliver the best service possible to the 39th Ward.

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 support the Chicago Department of Public Health and their efforts to promote awareness and education about HIV/AIDS and their prevention and treatment. I believe it is important for the City of Chicago to provide resources that further the health and well being of those living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS.

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

I support Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to make informed medical decisions. Women and men of all ages should have access to appropriate health care and support programs, and information on all options, such as adoption, when making a decision on abortion.

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

I believe HIV/AIDS treatment and education is an important component of public health and will continue to support funding for the city's efforts.

6) Do you favor marriage equality?

Yes, I support marriage equality. When the measure was up for a vote in the General Assembly, I strongly urged my representative, State Representative John D'Amico to vote

in favor of it. I proudly stood by him to offer encouragement as he cast the deciding vote on Senate Bill 10, which passed by one vote.

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, I would favor legislation increasing penalties for hate crimes committed based on the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity.

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

If LGBTs are qualified and it is in the best interests of the foster children, then they should be given the opportunity to become foster parents.

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

If LGBTs are qualified and it is in the best interests of the adoptees, then they should have the right to adopt children.

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

Yes, I would keep the Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT issues because it is important to ensure that LGBTs have a voice in Chicago.

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 am open to discussing the creation of such a school, but am also wary of the unintended consequences. A school designed specifically for LGBT students would be great because it could provide a safe space for our students to learn and grow. However, it could also be a target. I would not want to put our students in danger or create a situation in which they are unnecessarily subjected to harassment or violence.

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

I support the anti-bullying policies and training adopted and implemented by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in June 2014, and the newly enacted state law that enables school districts to punish those who use cyber-bullying tactics on fellow students.

13) Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive history education in Chicago Public Schools starting in middle school?

Aldermen do not have the jurisdictional authority to dictate CPS' curriculum because it operates and sets its policies independent of the City Council. However, I would support efforts to create a more inclusive history education.

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

As mentioned above, Aldermen do not have the jurisdictional authority to require CPS to provide sex education. I support age-appropriate sex education however, and would be willing to advocate on behalf of the issue if given the opportunity.

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 offering sensitivity training for officers and promoting increased communication between the police and the communities they serve via programs like CAPS can help improve relations. This is because building an environment of understanding is key to creating respect for all sides, by all sides. I would gladly support any such initiative to improve relations between our law enforcement and the citizens they serve, especially 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?

Currently, the minimum wage in Illinois stands at \$8.25 an hour. At this rate, an adult working 40 hours a week would only earn \$16,500 a year. This is not enough to support a family or to escape the cycle of poverty. I co-sponsored the ordinance raising the minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2019 because it would provide families in Chicago with a living wage while phasing the increase in over several years so as not to place undue burden on employers. I could not support a \$15 an hour minimum wage at this time because I do not believe our small businesses could shoulder that amount in the current economy. I also worry that since my ward borders the suburbs, some of my businesses would simply pick up and move a few blocks into the suburbs.

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

I believe implementing a constitutionally structured, mandatory minimum sentence for individuals caught using a weapon unlawfully and closing the gun show loophole can help stem the flow of illegal firearms into Chicago and reduce crime.

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

My top priorities for improving the 39th Ward are addressing community issues like O'Hare noise, public safety, and providing infrastructure improvements and quality city services in the face of shrinking budgets.

Residents across the ward have expressed their concerns over these issues and I have worked diligently to address them. When the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) made changes to landing and takeoff patterns, redirecting air traffic over neighborhoods in the 39th Ward and dramatically increasing the level of jet noise in the area, I implemented a multi-tier approach to combat the effects of airplane noise. By partnering with Congressman Mike Quigley and community groups such as FAIR (Fair Allocation in Runways), I have pushed to make the FAA and Chicago Department of Aviation answer the tough questions and present real plans for fair flight allocation and sound proofing assistance.

Because public safety is one of the most important quality of life issues, I have dedicated myself to ensuring that the 39th Ward gets its fair share of police officers and that our emergency personnel have the tools and resources they need to serve our communities. I have done this by working closely with the Commanders and officers of the ward, sending a liaison to all CAPS meetings, and regularly communicating with the 16th and 17th District police regarding all reports we receive on criminal activity. My staff and I also work hard to make sure that vacant buildings are identified and secured, that graffiti is removed promptly, and that we support our youth with positive alternatives and programming in our schools, parks, and community organizations.

Infrastructure improvements and service delivery are also essential components to our quality of life. That is why I am committed to funding infrastructure improvements that invest in our communities and enhance our business corridors. Throughout my years as Alderman, I have fought to bring millions of dollars of infrastructure improvements to the 39th Ward and I am constantly working with various city departments to improve the delivery of services to our residents. For example, in 2014 alone I spent over \$1 million dollars on street resurfacing throughout the ward.

I represent one of the City's most diverse wards with a population that is 54% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, 3% African American, and 18% Asian. My staff and I work hard to address and balance the concerns and hopes of these different racial and ethnic groups. My campaign slogan is, "Bringing It All Together" because my overriding goal in my years as

Alderman is to ensure whatever I do for the ward is not done to the detriment of any one group.

If re-elected, I will continue to fight for the interests of the 39th Ward and continue to work with residents and businesses to keep our neighborhoods the wonderful places they have always been to live and raise our families in.

19) Some studies show that some 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?

***Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* sets the goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020 offers the following suggestions that I am in accord with:**

- 1. Low Barrier Housing**
- 2. Education that helps lead to employment**
- 3. On-going support services connected to mainstream resources**
- 4. Independent Living Skills Training**
- 5. Connections to supportive and trusting adults and a support network**

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, but a person's sexuality is not an issue when I consider hiring an employee. The only qualifications I seek in my employees is the desire to serve constituents in a timely, knowledgeable, and friendly manner.

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

Please refer to my answer to question 6.

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

Some may think that after the passage of same-sex marriage, that many of the issues facing the LGBT community were resolved. Passing Senate Bill 10 was undoubtedly a landmark

accomplishment, but I still see problems in getting the straight community refocused on issues like increasing economic opportunities for the LGBT community and eliminating job discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Regardless of whether someone is LGBT or straight, we all share the same aspirations of making a better life for one's self and for future generations. Much work needs to be done to create a city and society that recognizes this fact.