

Aldermanic races

Return responses by fax (-173-871-7609). 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: Jennifer "Jen" Kramer

INCUMBENT? No

OFFICE SOUGHT: Ward 43 Alderman

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

Yes I would.

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

Yes 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?

My friends and contacts in the LGBTQ community are a key source of information for me, and through them I better understand the changing nature of HIV/AIDS treatment. While I am still learning, I am impressed by the results that drugs like PrEP have shown in preventing HIV transmission and I am thankful that, for those living with HIV/AIDS, the disease is becoming more and more manageable. At the same time I am saddened by statistics that show that a significant number of HIV positive individuals are unaware of their status and/or not seeking treatment. I support educating leaders and the community in general on the progress being made in treatment and prevention in order to further advance those efforts.

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

I support Roe v. Wade and the legal protections it provides to women. Government should be involved in this process as little as possible.

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

Funding must keep pace with the changes in treatment and prevention. Community outreach continues to be a key tool in preventing transmission and engaging positive individuals in treatment. Also, it continues to be important to work with the insurance industry to make sure that new and innovative drugs are covered so that all people, regardless of economic status, have access these new and impactful resources.

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?
Absolutely. We should be doing everything in our power to make more qualified parents eligible to adopt children.

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 like to improve our existing public schools and make sure they provide an open and tolerant learning atmosphere for LGBT students. If the need for an LGBT specific school still exists, I would discuss the best way to approach this with LGBT leaders.

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?
We need to find more ways to bring the police and the community together. If members of the community have a relationship with their local officers, they and the police will be able better understand the challenges of the community. This is especially important in neighborhoods with large LBGT populations; if the community and police come together, they will have a better understanding of community issues.

I recently was endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 7 and the Chicago Police Sergeants Association. I look forward to working with both organizations to find ways to improve relationships between police and 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?
I would have voted for increasing the minimum wage to \$13 an hour over the next few years. My opponent voted against this increase. I believe the minimum wage should increase periodically to match inflation.

17) How do you propose to handle the crime rate in Chicago, especially in minority neighborhoods?
Based on my past experience working hand in hand with the Chicago Police Department, I know that communication and relationships between the police and residents are paramount. Working together and with creative community policing strategies, we can ensure a safer neighborhood.

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

I want to live in a ward where residents don't feel the need to move away to find better schools and a safer environment. As alderman, I will work to get more police on the streets and improve our local public schools.

The residents of my ward want an ethical and honest alderman that will make tough decision with their best interests in mind. Many residents I speak with are not sure that they are receiving that level of representation from the incumbent.

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?

Chicago is lucky to have a robust and passionate homeless advocacy community made up of agency staff, policy advocates and community leaders. I will work closely with these homeless experts, as well as working specifically with the LGBTQ community, to better understand the causes and risks specific to homeless youth. In addition, I will seek out programs in other comparable cities that have successfully addressed this problem. For an issue as critical and complicated as youth homelessness, I can never have too much information or community input.

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?

There are openly LGBT members at the consulting firm that provides political and fundraising services for my campaign. My campaign manager is gay, and I consult with LGBT friends and former co-workers on political and government issues. I also have many LGBT friends that have and will volunteer for my campaign for alderman.

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

I have close friends who are LGBT working through the process of both adoption and beginning biological families. I advocated strongly for gay marriage rights and I have also fundraised for AIDS research.

I was the City Lead in the Gay Games in 2009, and the city's Gay Pride Parade liaison for 5 years.

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

From my perspective, there is still a struggle for equality in today's society despite recent victories like marriage equality in Illinois. Our children need to grow up in an environment where they feel comfortable expressing themselves freely.