

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](mailto: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: Tom Tunney INCUMBENT? **YES/NO**  
OFFICE SOUGHT: 44th WARD (if appropriate): Alderman

1) Do you have or would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination? Yes, my 44<sup>th</sup> Ward Office adheres to the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance that has been adopted by the Chicago City Council.

2) Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT-related issues? Our staff takes great pride in being sensitive to and responding to the needs and concerns of the LGBT community. I have prioritized hiring people from diverse backgrounds that are aware of issues important to the LGBT community. My Chief of Staff and I are both gay men and have worked one on one with staff on sensitivity issues as they arise.

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 Alderman, I have taken steps to not only protect city HIV/AIDS treatment and education programs, but to also advance them, including fighting to maintain the HIV Funding levels for prevention, housing, and treatment. I have supported local non-profits in their work including Center on Halsted, Night Ministry, the Broadway Youth Center, and Thresholds.

4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law? Every woman has the right to make decisions about her own body, without governmental, spousal, parental or religious interference. Decisions regarding reproductive rights are medical, not political, decisions.

5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education? Despite significant city budget challenges in recent years, I have worked to maintain and expand HIV/AIDS treatment and education within the city budget to ensure community and social service organizations can educate at risk populations and ensure they also have access to resources to serve people impacted by the disease.

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 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? While it's important for LGBT students to be with fellow LGBT peers, I believe the current focus should be integration and inclusion in the broader community of students, while ensuring all students, including LGBT students, have greater protections

against bullying. \_\_\_\_\_

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

YES

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 am exceptionally proud of the work my office staff and I led to retain and build the new 19<sup>th</sup> District Police Station within the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward. The officers at this station are sensitive to the needs of diverse populations, especially the LGBT community. I am also supportive of additional efforts to train officers throughout the city on sensitivity to the transgender and community as part of ongoing training officers receive on best serving diverse and disenfranchised communities.

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? As a small business owner, I know first hand the challenges associated with raising the minimum wage as a matter of economic competitiveness and small business viability and vitality. Chicago is competing for jobs with not only the suburbs, other communities in our state, neighboring states and even other countries. Chicago's minimum wage should be raised as part of a statewide effort to raise the minimum wage to not adversely affect the businesses in Chicago, especially in comparison to our nearest competitors.

17) How do you propose to handle the crime rate in Chicago, especially in minority neighborhoods? I believe in taking a hands on approach to dealing with crime in the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward and I would advise other Alderman to do the same. I listen to the community by regularly attending CAPS meetings to identify problem areas, and then work directly with our local police officers and commanders to direct resources to addressing these problems. I believe this hands-on approach has made Lakeview one of the safest neighborhoods in Chicago.

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

Maintaining affordable housing is the biggest financial problem facing the ward. In the past term, we were able to bring in LGBT-friendly affordable housing at 3600 N. Halsted, as well as affordable housing at 3208 N. Sheffield.

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 have strongly supported community institutions who provide services to LGBTQ youth, including recently working to retain the Broadway Youth Center in our community. I also provide ongoing support to the Night Ministry, Center on Halsted and additional organizations to ensure they receive the critical public funding they need and help protect the vulnerable young people that these organizations protect.

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, numerous current and previous staff, both in city government and in my restaurant business.

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

I'm an openly gay elected official an business owner, with a long history of supporting the LGBT community. My restaurant, Ann Sather, served as a meeting place during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. Today, it still serves as an LGBT-friendly meeting place.

---

23) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing the LGBT community today? The LGBT community needs to continue to be engaged in issues that impact the community, and the biggest challenge facing the community is perhaps a sense of apathy. There are many who believe the equal marriage civil rights movement was the final battle, yet there are many other small yet important issues we must continue to address including bullying, LGBT homelessness, transgender issues, and other societal and legal challenges.

---

---