

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: Amy Crawford

INCUMBENT: No

OFFICE SOUGHT: 46th Ward Alderman

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

Yes. As Alderman I would ban all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. I have advocated for gay, lesbian, and transgendered clients in discrimination cases across the Midwest, including marriage equality in Illinois (as co-counsel with Lambda Legal) and against a discriminatory law barring domestic partnership benefits in Michigan (as co-counsel with the ACLU), and I certainly would not tolerate discrimination of any kind in my office.

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

I would hold sensitivity training for my staff members on a wide range of issues, not just LGBT issues. As an openly lesbian candidate in a ward with a substantial LGBT population, I would certainly expect that anyone coming to work for me would already be sensitive to LGBT-related issues. Particularly in light of the broad diversity of the 46th Ward, I will ensure that my staff receives training on how to deal with constituents from all backgrounds, including seniors, the disabled, the homeless, and those living with mental illness.

- 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 have been a strong supporter of Howard Brown Health Center, one of the most prominent LGBT-focused health organizations in the country, and a place where those with HIV/AIDS have always been welcome. I twice co-chaired Howard Brown's "Garden of Eve" gala,

the agency's largest fundraiser. I would be proud to support Howard Brown's efforts and the efforts of other agencies as alderman, and would also be a strong supporter of public health programs focused on preventing and treating HIV/AIDS.

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

I strongly support a woman's exclusive right to make decisions about her own reproductive health. I fully support the ballot initiative that passed in November requiring all employers that provide coverage, to extend prescription drug coverage as part of that plan. As Alderman, I will advocate for access to proper healthcare for all women in Chicago.

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

I support public funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education. We have made great strides in this country in controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, but we can go further, and we certainly can't afford to lose ground. We need continued public funding to eradicate this disease.

6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)?

As a woman who is happily married to my partner, Anita, with our 1 year-old adopted son, I fully support marriage equality. Again, I represented the plaintiffs' in Illinois's marriage equality litigation.

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 favor legislation that increases penalties for crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity of the victim, as well as crimes based on other forms of discrimination. Hate crimes continue to be of particular concern to residents of the Boystown and Lakeview neighborhoods that form part of the 46th Ward. We need to send a message to hateful and ignorant people that targeting members of the LGBTQ community is unacceptable, and we can do this with strong hate crimes legislation.

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

Of course. Every child deserves to live in a caring environment, especially those kids who have had an exceptionally tough start to their life and are thrust into a foster home. LGBT people who are qualified and can provide the resources, love and support for these kids should be able to do so.

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

Of course -- my wife and I have adopted a son. The only relevant qualification to being a parent is the ability to love and care for a child.

9) Would you keep committees such as the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT Issues?

Yes. These committees are crucial in providing the City Council with needed education and information and LGBTQ related issues citywide.

10) 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 like that idea. In our current environment in Chicago, hopefully most LGBT students are being raised in a supportive environment, but I think it would be particularly useful for students from communities where being gay is still not broadly embraced. I currently mentor an LGBT teenager on the South Side, and I know how difficult school has been for her. She has found refuge in the LGBT group at school as well as in music and dance classes, which offer her a creative outlet and a supportive environment. I'm sure she would have loved to go to an LGBT high school.

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

Yes. Bullying is a problem that has persisted for decades in our schools, and too often ignored. I'm well familiar with the statistics showing the high rates of bullying of LGBTQ youth, and tragically, of LGBT suicides. As Alderman, I would work to promote any legislation whether education training or other that would decrease bullying in our schools.

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

Yes. It's important for both straight and LGBT students to see LGBT role models and to understand this part of our civil rights struggle.

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

Yes. Doing so would do much to prevent public health problems that persist among youth, including in the LGBTQ community.

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 believe police need sensitivity training to deal with all types of minorities, including people of color and the transgender community. In particular, we need police in the Lakeview area who understand the particular needs of this community. I know some community members have raised issues regarding the Center on Halsted and the transgender youth of color that they serve,

many of whom are homeless and walking our streets. I would be happy to engage with all impacted community members, the Center, the police, and the youth to come up with community-based solutions to ameliorate the issues for everyone.

I also think a revamped CAPS program would help strengthen the police rapport with our very diverse community. Obviously, this also ties in with the larger discussion our nation is having regarding police engagement with the African-American community. It is an issue we definitely need to address, and I would be pleased to work, as alderman, on building and mediating ward residents' relationship with police.

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?

Every person working to support their family deserves a living wage. As a private citizen, I supported the minimum wage increase in the City, but believe it does not go far enough quickly enough. I supported a raise to \$15 per hour.

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

As Alderman, I would fight to return us to our 2011 police patrol levels. In the 19th district, which covers most of the 46th Ward, police numbers are down 22% from where they were four years ago. In addition, we need more resources and opportunities for youth engagement programs that help young minority people create a plan and develop goals. While Uptown is not a "minority neighborhood," we have great diversity here. Unfortunately, we also have some of the gang violence seen in other minority neighborhoods. We need programs here such as the "Becoming a Man" pilot program that was rolled out in schools on the South and West Sides.

I also believe we need strong leaders in City Council to encourage the City to engage in partnership with state and federal authorities on the issue of gun trafficking. I will be a strong advocate for the strictest anti-gun legislation possible, and look forward to engaging on this serious issue.

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

The number one problem residents of the 46th Ward are concerned about is crime -- particularly violent crime. But this issue also ties in with the overarching project of reducing crime and encouraging economic development while maintaining the incredible diversity of our ward. I addressed my approach to the crime issue in response to Question 17. With respect to the broader issue, I think we need an alderman who can mediate some of the tensions we see particularly in the Uptown neighborhood. I would do this by working hard to encourage the business development that residents across the ward are calling for, while also attempting to

preserve, but where needed, improve the affordable housing in the ward. With a stronger economic climate and lower violent crime, I believe we can move beyond the political divisiveness of our past and enjoy the unique and vibrant cultural environment we have here.

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?

Again, the issue of homeless LGBTQ people is one that hits home here in the 46th Ward. I'm familiar with this issue up close because the lesbian teenager I mentor has struggled with finding a safe place to live. First and foremost, we need to address the affordable housing crisis we have across the city. In my ward, we need to stop the hemorrhaging of thousands of units affordable housing that has occurred over the past four years.

I also believe we need more funding for programs like Howard Brown's Broadway Youth Center, which serves the LGBT homeless population. I also think this is an issue where LGBT adults can and should help. We were all LGBT youth at one point, and no matter where we come from, we understand what it was like to be an outsider in this community. I know that at one point, UCAN's Bonnie Wade directed an LGBTQ "Youth Host Home" program that placed homeless young LGBTQ adults in safe homes for a period of several months until they could get on their feet. I don't believe the program still exists, but as alderman, I would love to be a champion of this program or one like it.

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?

Absolutely.

21) Are any members of your current staff—either campaign or general office personnel—openly LGBT?

Yes. Obviously, I'm openly gay, and I have an openly gay organizer on board as well as many gay and lesbian volunteers and donors.

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

As a partner at the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis, I have successfully litigated various LGBT civil rights cases across the Midwest, including marriage equality in Illinois (mooted by the passage of Illinois's civil unions law); a successful suit against Michigan's discriminatory Domestic Partner Benefit Restrictions Act, which was permanently enjoined in November; winning insurance coverage for a transgender individual's gender reassignment surgery; and winning permission for a transgender Kansas youth to attend public school as a girl. In these suits, I served as co-counsel with Lambda Legal, the ACLU, and Transgender Legal Defense &

Education Fund. I have been recognized for this work by the Alliance of Illinois Judges (an LGBT judges group) and as a "Top LGBT Lawyer Under 40" by the National LGBT Bar Association. I was a "Liberty Circle" donor to Lambda Legal for several years.

I have raised funds for Victory Fund, which works to elect LGBT candidates.

I have co-chaired two annual fundraising galas for Howard Brown Health Center, an organization that specializes in providing the LGBTQ community with comprehensive and culturally competent health care.

I currently mentor a lesbian youth on the South Side of Chicago. I have also mentored LGBT students at the University of Chicago Law School and LGBT associates at my law firm.

I came out of the closet as a senior at the University of Notre Dame in 1998 in a letter to the editor of the school newspaper to take a stand against discrimination that was occurring against an openly gay priest.

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

Now that we have achieved marriage equality in Illinois, I think we need to champion the rights of transgender people and work to end discrimination based on gender identity.