

# WINDY CITY TIMES

# 2019 CHICAGO ELECTION GUIDE

**A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FEATURING:**

- ★ **Mayoral candidate interviews**
- ★ **Aldermanic candidate interviews**
- ★ **Election charts of endorsements and Windy City Times' survey results**
- ★ **Additional election coverage**



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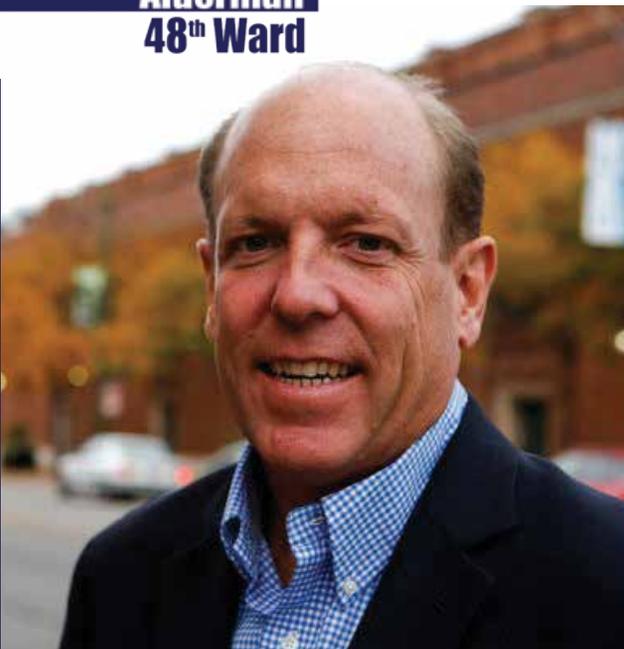
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From left: Mayoral candidates Paul Vallas, Toni Preckwinkle, Susana Mendoza, Garry McCarthy, Lori Lightfoot, John Kozlar, Jerry Joyce, La Shawn Ford, Bob Fioretti, Amara Enyia and Gery Chico.  
Photo by WCT staff

## Mayoral candidates discuss LGBT issues at South Loop forum

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Homelessness, anti-transgender violence and aging resources were among the topics discussed as candidates vying in the crowded 2019 mayoral election weighed in on LGBT-related issues at a Jan. 19 forum at Second Presbyterian Church in the South Loop.

Among those candidates who took part in the forum were former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas; Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle; Illinois State Comptroller Susana Mendoza; former Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy; attorney and former Chicago Police Board President Lori Lightfoot, the only openly LGBT candidate; attorneys John Kozlar and Jerry Joyce; state Rep. LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago); former Ald. Robert Fioretti; community organizer Amara Enyia; and former Chicago Public Schools Board President Gery Chico.

Newly -elected 5th District State Rep. Lamont Robinson—the first openly Black LGBT state representative in Illinois’ history—introduced the event, noting that challenges remain for Chicago’s LGBT residents even after they’ve made great strides, adding, “We have learned how to exercise our power at the polling place, and we will be out in force again as a community.”

Most of the candidates overlapped in expressing commitments to LGBT equality and inclusion, with Preckwinkle opening by noting her support of the community, for example, and Vallas detailing how equity had been an “organic” facet of his career. Lightfoot said, “We are a community who speaks our values and has the opportunity to do

so, and that is exactly the kind of leadership that I will take to the mayor’s office.”

Several spoke of ramping up the engagement between City Hall and LGBT community advocates, and all said they would be willing to bring aboard LGBT staffers, including members of the city’s trans community. Ford, for example, promised that were he to be elected, the Mayor’s Office would “lead the way in how to treat people and not discriminate.” Mendoza additionally said that her administration would accept LGBT members as “their full self.”

Fioretti said, “It boils down to hiring, training and sensitivity; we have to make it stick.”

All candidates agreed that the city should continue engagement with the Getting to Zero initiative, launched in Dec. 2018, that if successful would eliminate all new HIV transmissions by 2030; Preckwinkle mentioned the strategy in her opening remarks. Lightfoot for her part called for better funding for Chicago Department of Public health resources, while Chico said that the city must do more to bring down the cost of Truvada, the oral medication that is used for pre-exposure prophylaxis and is central to Getting to Zero’s strategy. Enyia called for auditing of the city’s Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Mendoza, in her remark calling for increased PrEP access, added that it was time to stop thinking of HIV as “only a gay man’s disease.”

A number of candidates also pledged to support continuing Chicago’s status as a “sanctuary city” for immigrants and refugees. Kozlar, who at 30 is the youngest person in the race, said that, “The first people we need to deport are our corrupt

politicians. ... We need to have the CPD solving our problems. They don’t need to be assisting ICE [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement].”

“Being undocumented should not be considered a crime,” said McCarthy. But Enyia also called into question how the city could be considered a “sanctuary city” when even its own residents are routinely profiled based on their race, something that transgender persons of color are routinely subjected to.

The forum’s moderators included Imani Rupert-Gordon of Affinity Community Services; Kenny Martin-Ocasio of Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action (ALMA); Kim Hunt of Pride Action Tank; and Anthony Galloway of Equality Illinois. Sponsors included Affinity Community Services, ALMA, the Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus, Equality Illinois Institute, LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, Pride Action Tank and Windy City Times.



Amara Enyia.  
Photo by Matt Simonette



## Alderman Tom Tunney

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## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Paul Vallas on background, minimum wage, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Paul Vallas ran as a 2002 Democratic gubernatorial candidate and was the 2014 Lieutenant Governor candidate alongside then Democratic incumbent Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn. He previously served as the CEO of Chicago Public Schools (CPS), among other education leadership positions and spent time as a teacher after college.

In 1979, Vallas began working for the state legislature and for state Sen. Dawn Clarke Netsch for 12 years; during that time, he learned about budgeting, finance and public policy. He served as Chicago's budget director and revenue director during Mayor Richard M. Daley's tenure before becoming CPS's CEO.

Vallas is running against a number of candidates for mayor of Chicago. He has called on all mayoral candidates to release their tax returns and for any Ald. Ed Burke-backed candidates to withdraw from the race.

**Windy City Times: With so many candidates running for mayor, what makes you more qualified to hold this office than the rest of people in the race?**

Paul Vallas: No other candidate has the depth or scope of my management experience. I have managed 18 multi-billion-dollar budgets. As CEO of CPS, pursuit of equity framed my initiatives. I built 78 schools in poor neighborhoods, the vast majority of construction contracts were given to minority and women-owned businesses. I had the guts to challenge Rahm Emanuel and I am not part of the Chicago pay-to-play culture.

**WCT: How will your previous role as Chicago Public Schools CEO inform how you approach education issues?**

PV: CPS is shrinking again, having lost 70,000 students since my departure. CPS prospered during my tenure because we stabilized finances, brought leadership continuity to individual schools, transformed schools into education and community service centers and dramatically expanded high-quality school options within neighborhood schools. I will adopt this strategy to reverse the system's decline and improve schools.

**WCT: Do you back an elected school board? Where do you stand on neighborhood schools versus charter schools?**

PV: I believe Janice Jackson is well-qualified to be the head of CPS. I want a hybrid board that includes members elected from Local School Councils and appointed members. The mayor should have some direct appointed powers, because there needs to be experts on the board.

Charter and public schools should be funded equitably and held to the same standards.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

PV: As Chicago's budget director and CPS CEO, I put domestic-partner benefits in all the city contracts. I supported marriage equality on record since 2001. My approach has always been to em-

brace and support the LGBT community and let my actions speak louder than my words as I fight for rights and services for all Chicagoans.

**WCT: Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive education in Chicago Public Schools starting in middle school regardless of what happens on the state level?**

PV: Yes.

**WCT: Are any of your campaign staffers/volunteers openly LGBT?**

PV: Yes.

opportunity zones, allocate one-third of TIF revenues to an investment fund to make capital and infrastructure investments in poor communities, invest cannabis and gambling revenues into a community-based social service infrastructure across the board, remove obstacles for landlords to convert unimproved space on their properties into garden units, create a Chicago Housing Trust to take the estimated 50,000 vacant properties and give them to community-based organizations and to provide vulnerable people with living space and services.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

PV: We should pay people a livable wage and make it gradual, so businesses do not leave. Some smaller businesses should be offered tax offsets so they can pay their employees more and not struggle as a result.

**better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?**

PV: I will restore beat integrity to ensure officers are in districts where they are familiar and are familiar with them, rebuild the supervisory infrastructure, provide redundant and comprehensive training, limit the merit promotion system, create a pipeline of first responders drawn from Chicago high school ROTC programs—which serve 10,000 students a year, 90 percent of whom are Black and Latino—to ensure first responders represent the community, open community health and wellness centers in each police district and work with the community, including the LGBTQ community. I will also increase number of officers, detectives and sergeants and increase redundant training.

**WCT: What kind of relationship do you plan**



Paul Vallas.  
Photo by Shaun Gillen

**WCT: What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?**

PV: I will build my budget to give every area of the city access to the resources they need, including HIV/AIDS treatment and education.

**WCT: How will you address the city's continued infrastructure problems? Blighted and underserved areas?**

PV: I have a number of solutions, including: take full advantage of the Federal Opportunity Zone program to raise capital for Chicago's 133

**WCT: How would you address the budget shortfalls that do not include additional regressive taxation?**

PV: I presented a comprehensive financial plan to solve Chicago's financial crisis, fully fund the pension system and permanently cap property taxes, fees and fines. My budget will allow for fully funded pensions without reduced benefits and no regressive taxation through revenue sourcing, a fair share state plan and city expenditure reductions of at least five percent.

**WCT: What are your recommendations for**

**on having with the city council, Gov. Pritzker and state legislators?**

PV: My 12 years spent working for the state legislature, most of those years for Dawn Clark Netsch, and my twelve years working as City Revenue Director, Budget Director and CPS CEO gave me the chance to foster good relationships with both the governor's office and the legislature. I am confident I will get what Chicago needs and deserves.

See [vallasforallchicago.com/](http://vallasforallchicago.com/).

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Willie Wilson talks 10-point plan, Ed Burke and more

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Willie Wilson was a Chicago mayoral candidate in 2015 and a U.S. presidential candidate in 2016.

He was born in Louisiana into a family of sharecroppers and later moved to Chicago in 1965. Wilson became one of the first Black McDonald's Restaurant owners in the United States, owning five stores. He founded the Grammy-winning Willie Wilson Productions, where he produces and hosts the long-running, syndicated gospel music television show *Singsation!* In 1997, Wilson founded Omar Medical Supplies, an international business that distributes disposable products for use in medical, industrial and food-service areas.

**Windy City Times: With so many candidates running for mayor, what makes you more qualified to hold this office than the rest of people in the race?**

Willie Wilson: I have a heart for the people and will always put people above politics. I have never been a part of the corrupt political machine and have chosen to self-fund so that I will only be accountable to the people, not big corporation or political parties. Until there is real equality and inclusion of opportunity and resources, our city will continue to be split down the middle, violence will continue running rampant, shady politicians will continue running amuck and our debt and taxes will be out of control. Inclusion is the key. Together is the way.

**WCT: Expand on your 10-point plan for Chicago and why you chose those issues.**

WW: I have listened to the people. Taxes, schools, economic development, justice-system reform, red-light cameras, legalizing marijuana, ending corruption, safe neighborhoods and ending police brutality and violence are all things that resonate among the people. No new taxes. Only new revenues. When economic development is up, violence comes down.

**WCT: Where do you stand on the Ed Burke situation?**

WW: I have only met him once. Bill Daley, Toni Preckwinkle, Susana Mendoza and Gery Chico have been a perpetual part of machine politics, have direct ties to Burke and have received support from him one way or another. Now they are distancing themselves. That is hypocritical. They also need to be investigated and Burke should resign. He has been there far too long and is a good example of why we need term limits in Chicago.

**WCT: I see that you back an elected school board. What will that board be tasked to do? Tell me what your ideal Chicago Public School (CPS) system would look like.**

WW: Yes. I will have an elected school board that works with community-based parent organizations and CPS staff to determine the proper number, size, location and staffing of each school and in each community. I am not a supporter of charter schools. I believe taxpayer money should be used for a single, unified and equal system of

education for all students.

**WCT: I noticed you did not have anything about the LGBT community on your campaign website. What is your vision for the LGBT community going forward?**

WW: LGBT people, like every other group, should be equal, have the same access and feel safe—just like every other group and community in Chicago.

**WCT: Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive education at all Chicago Public Schools starting in middle school regardless of what happens on the state level?**

WW: If city council votes in favor, I will also. The same applies for the pending Illinois state law. We do have to respect the legal process and abide by the laws of the land.

**WCT: Are any of your campaign staffers openly LGBT?**

WW: Yes.

**WCT: What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?**

WW: It should be increased so every neighborhood will have the same access. Until there is real equality and inclusion of opportunity and resources across Chicago, we will continue to be a Tale of Two Cities.

**WCT: How will you address the city's continued infrastructure problems? Blighted and underserved areas?**

WW: Communities with resources, thriving businesses and jobs have low crime rates. Those who do not, have higher crime rates. The TIF Plan was designed to stimulate growth and improvements in these so called blighted communities. We must get back to the original goal of this program and use these designated funds for which they were purposed.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

WW: We need a living wage. Fifteen dollars per hour is still not enough to survive in this city.

**WCT: How would you address the budget shortfalls that do not include additional regressive taxation and fees?**

WW: Clean up city corruption that costs taxpayers \$500 million annually. Reduce and elim-

inate many of the nickel-and-dime taxes like the bag tax, the city vehicle sticker, outrageous parking fines, fees and red light cameras. Establishing new revenues such as my proposed citizens-owned casino, the legalization of marijuana and the reopening of Meigs Field will bring in a surplus of \$2.5 to \$3 billion annually.

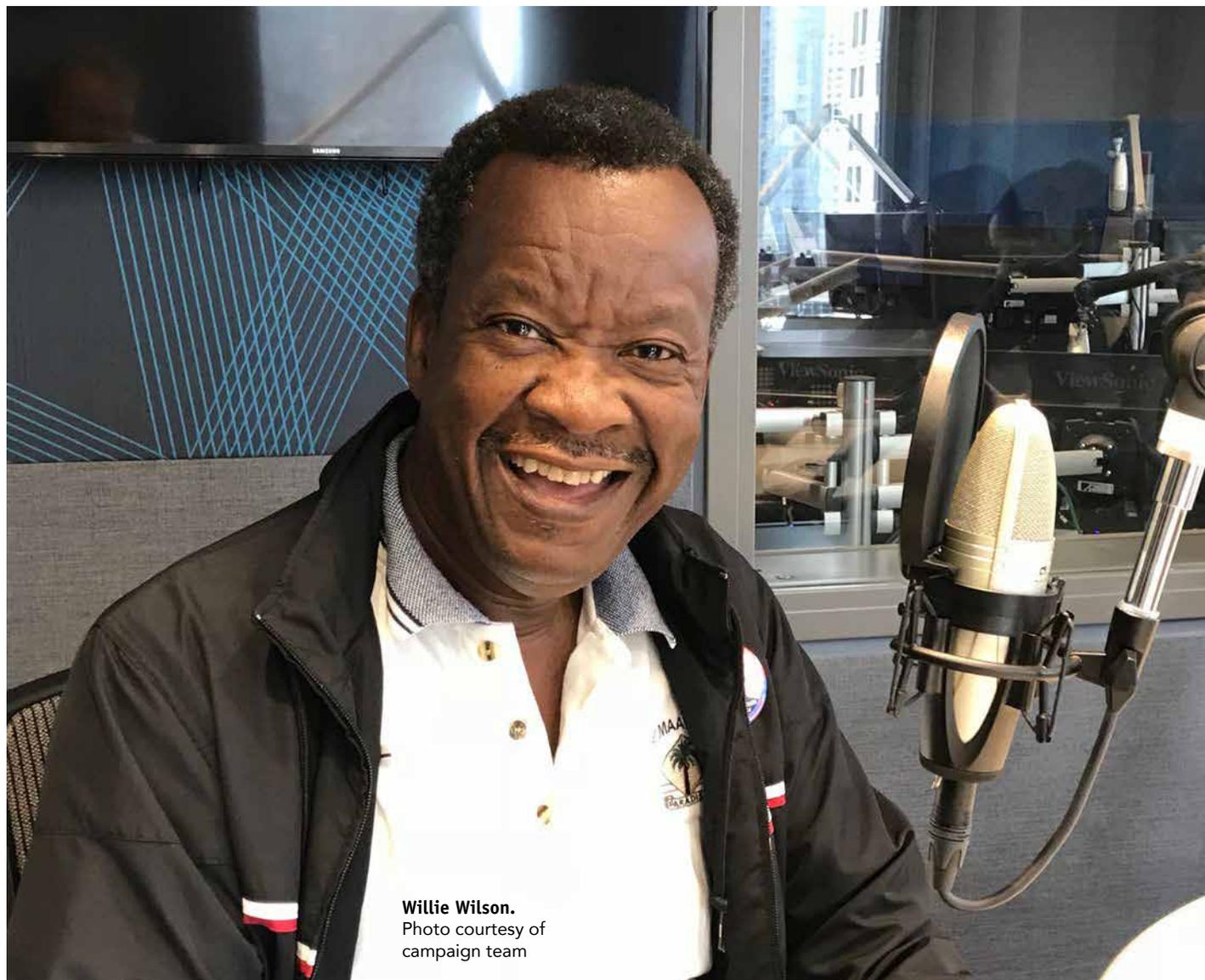
**WCT: What are your recommendations for better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?**

WW: I intend to divide the city into four separate police districts and form community-based citizen committees in each district to help choose the best police leader for their district. This will bridge the gap between citizens and police to work together and develop a trusting, collaborative process that should lead to solving current issues and deter and decrease future crime.

**WCT: What kind of relationship do you plan on having with the city council, Gov. Pritzker and state legislators?**

WW: As an international businessman, I get along and negotiate with a diverse array of people every day. I plan to do the same with both city and state elected officials.

See [www.williewilsonformayor.com/](http://www.williewilsonformayor.com/).



**Willie Wilson.**  
Photo courtesy of campaign team

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Toni Preckwinkle talks Ed Burke, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Toni Preckwinkle is currently the Cook County Board president—a position she has held since 2010. She is the first Black woman to be elected to that office.

Prior to that, Preckwinkle was the 4th Ward alderman on Chicago's city council for 19 years. She moved to Chicago from St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1965 to attend college and has lived in the city ever since.

**Windy City Times: With so many candidates running for mayor, what makes you more qualified to hold this office than the rest of people in the race?**

Toni Preckwinkle: I have a background in community building, strengthening local public schools and working with residents and police around public safety issues for over 25 years as an elected official. As county board president, we have stabilized county government, which is now a model now for other counties across the country.

I am the most progressive candidate in the race. I ran for alderman twice against the machine, then successfully a third time. I was a founder of the progressive caucus and sponsored several affordable housing and living wage ordinances. I was one of five alderman who opposed the parking meter deal and opposed then-Mayor Daley for a majority of my votes.

**WCT: What similarities and differences do you see between your current Cook County board president role and [being] mayor of Chicago?**

TP: Both are administrative challenges, but the mayor's priorities are much broader than the County Board's where 90 percent of the money goes to public health and safety.

**WCT: How would you characterize your relationship with Ed Burke and his family? What about the \$10,000 he gave to your 2018 campaign? Hiring his son for a county job despite him being under investigation by the sheriff's office?**

TP: During my time in city council, Ed Burke was never a friend or an ally. His finance committee chair position put us on opposite sides of all divided votes. When I became County Board President, I worked closely with Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke on criminal justice reform.

A contribution that Ed allegedly extorted from a third party ended up in our coffers via an online donation. We returned the money, which was more than was allowed, when we could not get the contributor to respond.

My office was unaware Burke's son was under investigation and had we know his resume would never have been passed along to Homeland Security which vetted and hired him.

**WCT: I see that you back an elected school board. Which groups of people should be on**

**that board? Tell me what your ideal Chicago Public School system would look like.**

TP: The board should be lead by an educator and made up of people from across the city, meaning district elections not an at-large election. The city must invest in more teachers, psychologists, social workers, nurses and paraprofessionals for neighborhood schools to give the same opportunities for success as kids who attend magnet, selective enrollment and charter schools.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

TP: It begins with justice and inclusion for the transgender community. There must be equity for LGBT Chicagoans. We are lucky to have a strong LGBT community and many long-standing organizations who serve their community to help achieve our goals.

**WCT: Would you advocate for mandatory LGBT-inclusive education within CPS starting in middle school regardless of what happens on the state level?**

TP: Yes; we do not need to wait for the state.

**WCT: Are any of your campaign staffers/volunteers openly LGBT?**

TP: Yes, we are proud to have members of the LGBT community as part of our senior staff, surrogates and volunteers.

**WCT: What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?**

TP: I will support and fully fund the Getting to Zero campaign, which the Cook County Health and Hospital System is a part of.

**WCT: How will you address the city's continued infrastructure problems? Blighted and underserved areas?**

TP: Cities and regions are most successful when they have the least inequality. We need to figure out which communities are the most challenged and direct resources to them.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

TP: I have long been a proponent for the fight for \$15, which takes a family of four to just above the poverty line.

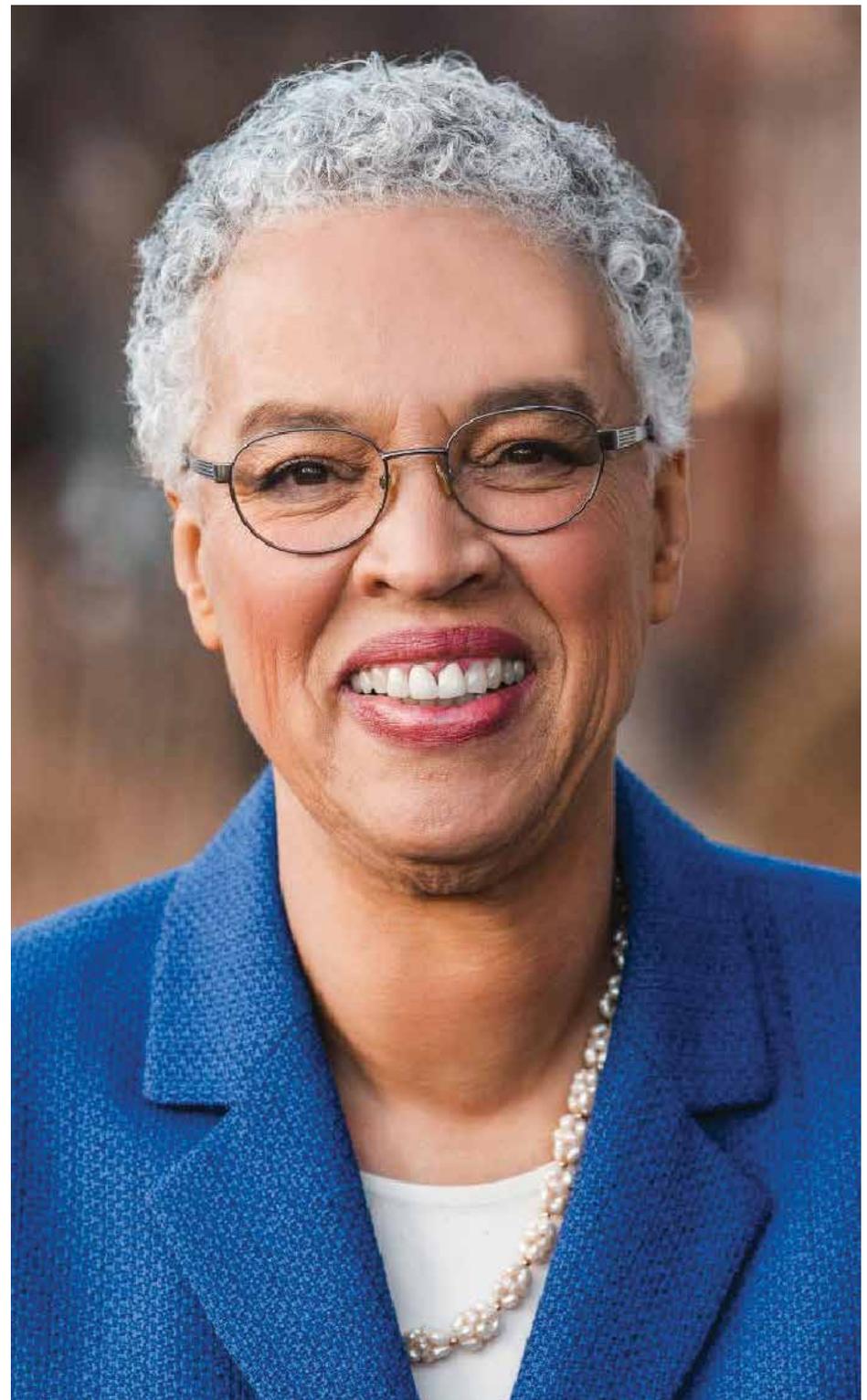
**WCT: How would you address the budget shortfalls that do not include additional regressive taxation and fees?**

TP: I will review the city's budget to determine what can be eliminated or rearranged to reduce spending. The recent move of workman's comp from the finance committee into the executive branch will help, along with TIF reform.

**WCT: What are your recommendations for better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, especially people of color and the transgender community?**

TP: We must improve relations between police and the transgender community. A priority is investigating unsolved murders of transgender women of color and preventing similar incidents.

There must be transgender representation in the city's civilian office of police accountability



Toni Preckwinkle.

Photo courtesy of campaign team

board.

The police department needs to invest in and have more training in general and especially around interactions with people of color and the transgender community. There are not enough resources for professional development, particularly for our crisis intervention training and de-escalating strategies.

I proposed an office of criminal justice in the mayor's office to focus on bringing public safety

stakeholders together to ensure we are treating everyone in the city fairly, especially the LGBT community and people of color.

**WCT: What kind of relationship do you plan on having with the city council, Gov. Pritzker and state legislators?**

TP: I am really encouraged to have J.B. Pritzker as our new governor, who will be a great ally in our efforts to transform the city.

See <https://toniforchicago.com/>.

ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Daley discusses his mayoral run

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Attorney and administrative official William Daley has a last name that, for many Chicagoans, instantly brings to mind the word “mayor”—his father and brother held that post for years. But Daley thinks his particular skill-set and work experience—he was President Bill Clinton’s Secretary of Commerce as well as President Barack Obama’s chief of staff, among other positions—qualifies him for the top post in Chicago city government in the years ahead.

**Windy City Times: What prompted you to run? How do you think your work and experience to this point would benefit City Hall?**

William Daley: I come to this differently than a lot of the other candidates. Even though I grew up my whole life in Chicago, and my kids and grandkids are here, I have not been a career politician or a career government official, not that that’s a criteria for governing right now. But I’ve been around policy-making my whole life. I think the combination, and having been Commerce Secretary, gives me the perspective of what’s needed in this city and managing a “company” that has difficult financial problems, with myriad issues, and a diverse electorate and populace. I think I’m in a good position to do that and understand where the city is at.

**WCT: What are two or three most significant issues affecting Chicagoans?**

WD: I think crime is obviously something that’s affecting us, that has some parts of the city really feeling the pain, with 2,000 shootings and 500-plus murders. With just about every community in the city, if there’s even the perception of a crime issue—whether an attack or a robbery, or something like what happened to that actor on the Empire series recently—even if it may not be in my specific community, and mine might be relatively safe compared to others, that concern translates throughout the city. We’ve got to get a handle on that.

We also have to consider the economic health of the city going forward, and the affordability for residents. We have to consider the fees and taxes that are being layered on. There’s also school issues, not affecting just taxpayers but kids in school, how we educate the kids in the city. An overhanging question is, can we keep this economic boom going? It’s not been as good as in other cities, but you have to have continued growth; attempting to solve other issues without that growth becomes more difficult, because you begin to run out of resources.

**WCT: What are the most important issues for LGBT Chicagoans at this point?**

WD: Like with every other community here, I think crime—like I said there’s obviously a crime issue like you had with that young actor, where’s the allegation or belief that he was targeted. We have to be vigilant on that. Things are better in terms of discrimination, but there’s a subtle-

ness—at the national level especially, we see too many people being open with their prejudices. Whether it’s about race or sexual orientation, we’ve got to be vigilant as leaders and say, ‘That is wrong,’ or ‘That is illegal.’

Otherwise, there’s taxes and education, and seeking out the same opportunities that others are seeking. No matter the community, that is the basis of the work that I’m trying to do.

**WCT: What is your position on reproductive freedom?**

WD: I’ve been pro-choice. I know some folks are alleging that, since I was in the White House in a time when they was some debate on that, that I’m not. It’s a charge that they make without facts. When I was in the White House, it was my job to make sure that the president was aware of the sides of the issue being discussed. It was not a personal agenda. I was pro-choice. My job was to say what people were and were not advocating. That’s what a chief of staff is supposed to do, and Barack Obama was the type of leader who wanted to hear different sides. ... There was this buzz, because I had that role and did not want to ram one position down his throat. That’s what I did, and the president made the judgement.

**WCT: What kind of relationship do you see yourself as having with the City Council?**

WD: I will have a very respectful relationship.

I understand their role. On the other hand, we’re almost a quarter of the way through the 21st Century, and the structure is what it was in the last century. The aldermanic system was set up at a time when all the aldermen were mini-mayors. All city services went through the aldermen. ... But they ought to be more of a legislative body, because you have a political system that’s been set up that’s very different, and I don’t think you have to be afraid of change. I will a respectful and direct relationship, and I would expect that they have the same with me. I don’t want there to be battles, like there have been in Washington, or in Springfield the last four years. I want to be able to sit down and say, “We have to look at this.” That’s what I was able to do in both the private and the public sectors.

See [daleyformayor.com](http://daleyformayor.com).



William Daley.  
Photo courtesy of Daley

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Gery Chico on LGBT issues, policing, Ald. Ed Burke

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Gery Chico is a lawyer who is aiming to be Chicago's next mayor. He is a former Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners president and Illinois State Board of Education chair.

This race is not the first rodeo for Chico, who has run for the U.S. Senate and who ran for mayor or eight years ago. (Little-known fact: Chico has lived in eight of Chicago's neighborhoods.)

He recently talked with Windy City Times about LGBT issues and his connections to controversial Ald. Ed Burke. However, he started the conversation by talking about an issue important to him.

**Gery Chico:** So we had discussions in City Hall all the time about fixing streets, the police, lights and other things. But it's important to know how things work. I'll give you an example: We were talking about water mains one day. What is a water main? How big is it?

We went out to a job site one day; then, they see all the dirt piled up on the neighbors' parkway, trucks that take up parking spaces and other things. What did they get out of this? They see how things work; it's important that when

you see something, you understand the ramifications—and you come up with better ideas of how the city operates.

I used to ride around in my car all the time, calling 311; there was a poor guy assigned to me (named Abe), there was such a heavy volume. Streetlights would be out, there'd be unreadable street signs... It was the way I grew up—no detail was too small. I drove down Michigan Avenue one day and there was a pothole this big [demonstrates with hands].

You need someone who's going to be rabidly attentive to these things. It's the same thing with graffiti—not murals, but graffiti. But gang-bangers who put up the graffiti? Out it goes.

You gotta do stuff like that in order to have a city that's maintained. Obviously, this is just the housekeeping stuff. There's bigger stuff, like crime—especially regarding the LGBTQ community.

**Windy City Times: What is the best way to at least cut down on crime?**

GC: I believe in community policing. I started it in 1992-93; it was revolutionary at the time. Mayor Daley had a great idea: to change from the reactive policing to 911 calls, and to get out in

front of it—to talk with neighbors at the beat level. People should have faith in the police so they can report things to them.

**WCT: I do know some people who'd call that snitching—or they're intimidated, and they wouldn't abide by it.**

GC: The United States Justice Department lives on snitching; they pay for it. It's called whistleblowing—call it what you want.

As citizens, if you see someone get shot, you're supposed to report it. But you can anonymously give someone a tip. It's about justice and safety in the streets.

I also believe in equal protection under the law. As a lawyer with a constitutional background, it was a fairly easy call. When I ran for the Senate [in 2004], the headline read, "Chico the only candidate to support gay marriage." It surprised me; Obama said "no" and [State Comptroller Daniel] Hynes and other candidates waffled. [Editor's note: Obama had previously supported same-sex marriage, in 1996, but then backtracked.] The Church did not give me communion at Mass because of my position; I stood my ground and I'm proud to this day [that I did so].

In my career, I have done all sorts of things to make it things for same-sex couples. Transgender, bisexual and queer lifestyles have become much more prevalent now, but [even back] when I was in government I wanted to make sure that people in same-sex couples could leave property for others, among other things. One guy told me he wanted to get LGBT people in the school curric-

ulum; it's a no-brainer to me. Maybe [Boystown's Legacy Walk] could be an integrated part of the curriculum.

There's still so much work to be done on so many fronts—like with PrEP, which is hugely important to the community. We also need to make other medications financially available to those who need them.

We need to fight discrimination on a number of levels. One, you have to model behavior; you have to work and appoint LGBT people to different positions—that's the public sector. At the same time, when you find that people are discriminating in the private sector, you have to help prosecute, or at least investigate. The Chicago Commission on Human Relations used to have that ability, but they gutted this.

**WCT: Who are "they?"**

GC: The Emanuel administration... Now, were they trying to save money? I suppose, but doing so infects the fabric of the city in a lot of different ways.

**WCT: The controversy regarding Ald. Ed Burke—mayoral candidate Bob Fioretti said that Burke had endorsed you last year. What's your response to that?**

GC: The other people in this race who have all scattered for the corners... I've known Ed for years, and he's been kind to me; his wife has been kind to me. Does that mean that I condone what's alleged in that criminal complaint? Absolutely not.

At the end of the day, we all stand on our own two feet. Ed Burke wasn't with me at Chicago Public Schools. He wasn't with me when I worked at the mayor's office with Rich Daley—and, frankly, the two didn't get along that well. He wasn't with me at the Park District, and he certainly wasn't with me at the State Board of Education. At all those places, I made demonstrable improvements.

So I don't run from my association with him. He said, "I think Gery Chico is the most qualified person to run this city." Daley said that, too, in 2011; [candidate] Paul Vallas said that in 2011. So I must have a hell of a lot of endorsements out there.

Also, there should be no outside jobs if you're alderman. They pay you 120 grand.

**WCT: And that would also work for the mayor?**

GC: Oh, yes. You just draw a paycheck from there. When I worked at the mayor's office, that cost me a couple hundred grand; I was making a lot more at Sidley [ & Austin]. I don't need any extra money.

**WCT: What's your biggest strength in this race, and what's your biggest weakness?**

GC: My biggest strength is a passion for this city—that and a knowledge of the government. My grandpa came here in the '20s. My mom and dad met at Gage Park High School. I went to Kelly High School, my wife went to Senn and my kids went to public school. Chicago is in my blood.

Biggest weakness? I love to eat too much.

**WCT: THAT'S your biggest weakness?**

GC: Yeah. I imagine there are some others, but eating's a big one. I'll be at Beverly today and I want to stop at that pancake house down there. They have the best apple pancakes.

See <https://chicoformayor.com/>.



Gery Chico.  
Photo from Caryn Berman

ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Susana Mendoza on accusations, LGBT platform

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Illinois state Comptroller Susana Mendoza is among the many individuals aiming to be Chicago's next mayor.

Her supporters say she brings many assets to the table, including a fighting spirit (telling *Windy City Times* she was posting signs during the recent polar vortex) and a glowing resume (including being the first Hispanic independently elected to statewide office in Illinois). Mendoza's detractors, however, cite her connections to Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan and embattled Chicago Ald. Ed Burke, among others.

Mendoza gamely talked about those items and more with *Windy City Times* recently.

**Windy City Times: What separates you from all the other candidates?**

Susana Mendoza: In terms of my LGBTQ policy, I'm very proud to say that I've been at the forefront of some of the biggest fights the LGBTQ community has had to face.

When I was elected in 2000—representing one of the most conservative Catholic districts in Illinois—I showed that I was for equality regarding marriage (or civil unions, back then); everybody should be treated equally. I reached out to the Equality Illinois folk to see what I could do to help; back then, it seemed like such a long shot that we would even have civil rights. Of all the candidates running for mayor, I feel that I'm the only one who took the time to fight when it mattered the most.

**WCT: Let me switch gears for a second. There was an article in the Patch that talked about your connections with [Chicago Ald.] Danny Solis and the Daley machine...**

SM: Oh, is that the [piece] by Mark Konkol? That's utterly false; I wouldn't give any credence to that piece.

**WCT: But he's not the only one that's talked about your connections with Madigan and Burke. What's your response to those people?**

SM: Here's what I would say, because it's a fair question. Let me put things in perspective: I was elected as a state rep of the Southwest Side of Chicago; by design, I had to work with these people. And I had working relationships with my colleagues, both Democratic and Republican. Yes, some of those people have gotten into trouble in the past—but that's a question of their actions, not mine. It's not fair to paint me with the same brush.

Number two, I went on to become city clerk of Chicago, so I had to interface with all 50 aldermen. I had nothing to do with people's dirty actions; I carry myself with the highest form of integrity. Now, as state comptroller, I have to interface with all 118 state reps, 59 [state] senators, mayors and trustees; I know every elected official. It's not fair to impugn my integrity because of someone else's actions. I have nothing to do with what they do behind the scenes.

But as for that garbage article coming from [Konkol], who has never spoken to me once in his life and who does not know me—maybe I should consider it an honor badge coming from him.

**WCT: You did mention 50 alderpersons earlier. Would you be in favor of reducing the size of the City Council?**

SM: I think that's a debate we need to have. I think you have to get rid of aldermanic prerogative; otherwise, all you would do is give way more power to, say, 15 aldermen. We'd go from having a small fiefdom to having a huge chunk of the city. There is a movement to cut down the number of aldermen and, from a fiscal perspective, you could argue that it would work. But you have to look at aldermanic prerogative; you're actually consolidating power. New York [City] has fewer

aldermen, but they don't have unchecked power like we do here, and that's a big concern. We can limit the number of aldermen, but we have to limit aldermanic prerogative as well.

**WCT: Your LGBTQ platform [which is on your website] is pretty comprehensive. What do you think are the biggest problems the community faces?**

SM: For the last 18 years of my life, I been involved in the fight for equality, and I don't believe that the fight for equality is over. Big issues include healthcare access, safety, economic equity and basic rights—they have an even bigger impact on the LGBTQ community, right? I plan for a future that supports members of the LGBTQ community, and that includes everyone.

**WCT: I told a friend of mine I was going to interview you, and he said to ask you if you plan on raising property taxes.**

SM: No! Tell him that's the last thing I plan to do. I hate property taxes and, unfortunately, we're victimized by a rigged and corrupt property-tax system that was championed by former assessor Joe Berrios. Toni Preckwinkle, who's

running for mayor, had so many opportunities to smack that down.

**WCT: What do you feel is your biggest strength and biggest weakness in this race?**

SM: It's a tough question because I feel I have a lot of [strengths]. But what separates me from the rest of the candidates is that I just managed the state through the worst fiscal crisis in its history. Chicagoans need a fighter who's honest, but it's important to have someone who can navigate finances. The truth is that Chicago might be entering a recession in the next two or three years, and whoever is mayor is going to have to handle that.

**WCT: And your biggest weakness?**

SM: Hmmm. I like to think I'm pretty strong. I have cold-induced asthma, but I was out there putting up signs yesterday. I'd like to think I'm the strongest I've ever been.

I'm a human being, and I'm fallible. As for a weakness, I can only think of nacho cheese Doritos—and that I have a potty mouth, so I have to work on that.

See <https://susanamendoza.com/>.



Susana Mendoza.  
Photo courtesy of campaign team

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Amara Enyia on innovation and equity for Chicago

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

“What I would want 40 years from now is for 2019 to be a watershed moment in the city where anything was possible, where we actually valued ideas over personalities, where we actually looked to solve problems not just to get elected, and where this culture of fear is destroyed, because fear keeps us in a state of mediocrity.”—Dr. Amara Enyia

A marathoner fluent in several languages, Amara Enyia—a progressive candidate running for mayor of Chicago—has worked in both the private sector and within grassroots organizations. The daughter of Nigerian immigrants, she also holds a Ph.D. in education policy and a law degree with a focus on international and environmental law, among various other degrees.

**Windy City Times: What would be the top issues you'd focus on if elected?**

Dr. Amara Enyia: I've been very intentional about acknowledging the fact that we have to focus on several key issues in Chicago at the same time because of the nature of the challenges that we face. So, the top issues I would focus on would be one, the city's fiscal health and economy; two, education; three, public safety—and by public safety, that's police accountability, that's violence, it encompasses all of those things. Four, issues of housing and affordability. When we talk about affordability in the city, I include issues around gentrification and displacement.

**WCT: Backing up to education, what are your thoughts on mandatory LGBTQ-inclusive education in Chicago public schools?**

AE: At the state level, I believe there was legislation mandating African American history in the curriculum—the issue was it wasn't being done and I imagine the same challenges might arise in this case. Including it into the curriculum is fine; I think people should be exposed to the history and the culture, both historical and contemporary. But there also has to be some mechanism to make sure that it actually happens in our schools.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBTQ community in Chicago? And what do you think is the biggest problem facing the community?**

AE: In my personal experience, even within the LGBTQ community, there are voices that are still marginalized. I live on the west side of Chicago, and I recall when several Black trans women were being killed—are still being killed—and their stories do not get heard. I was part of a press conference a group of organizations held at police headquarters down on 35th Street late last year trying to raise awareness of what is happening to transwomen of color in particular. It's relevant to me because it's one of the things I've been involved with and heard of the last several years. There's the notion that just because there's Boystown that, somehow, all of the spaces [there] are, just by their very nature, inclusive and welcoming. And that's not the case.

**WCT: And your vision?**

AE: Being more open to listening to the voices of the marginalized within marginalized groups. Those voices don't get the attention that they need in order to address the issues that are unique to them. And part of that means accountability from those spaces that are supposed to be safe spaces. The other issue that is important to me is our young people, especially queer youth of color. We talk about homelessness in Chicago and so many are homeless or couch surfing from being kicked out of their homes. We have to make sure that they have safe places to stay, access to the medical and public health care that they need, and that they have safety nets in their schools.

**WCT: What do you think is missing from coverage you've seen of yourself? What do you want voters to know that they might not know already?**

AE: Well, I think, for me, it's the way that I'm covered. I hate to say, it's so typical. It really is. There are always these questions about experience, and I probably have the broadest experience of any candidate that's running. [I've] worked in government, I've been an executive running a non-profit, I've worked in the private sector, I've worked internationally, extensively, on public policy issues. And at my core, I've always been an organizer; that undergirds all of my professional work.

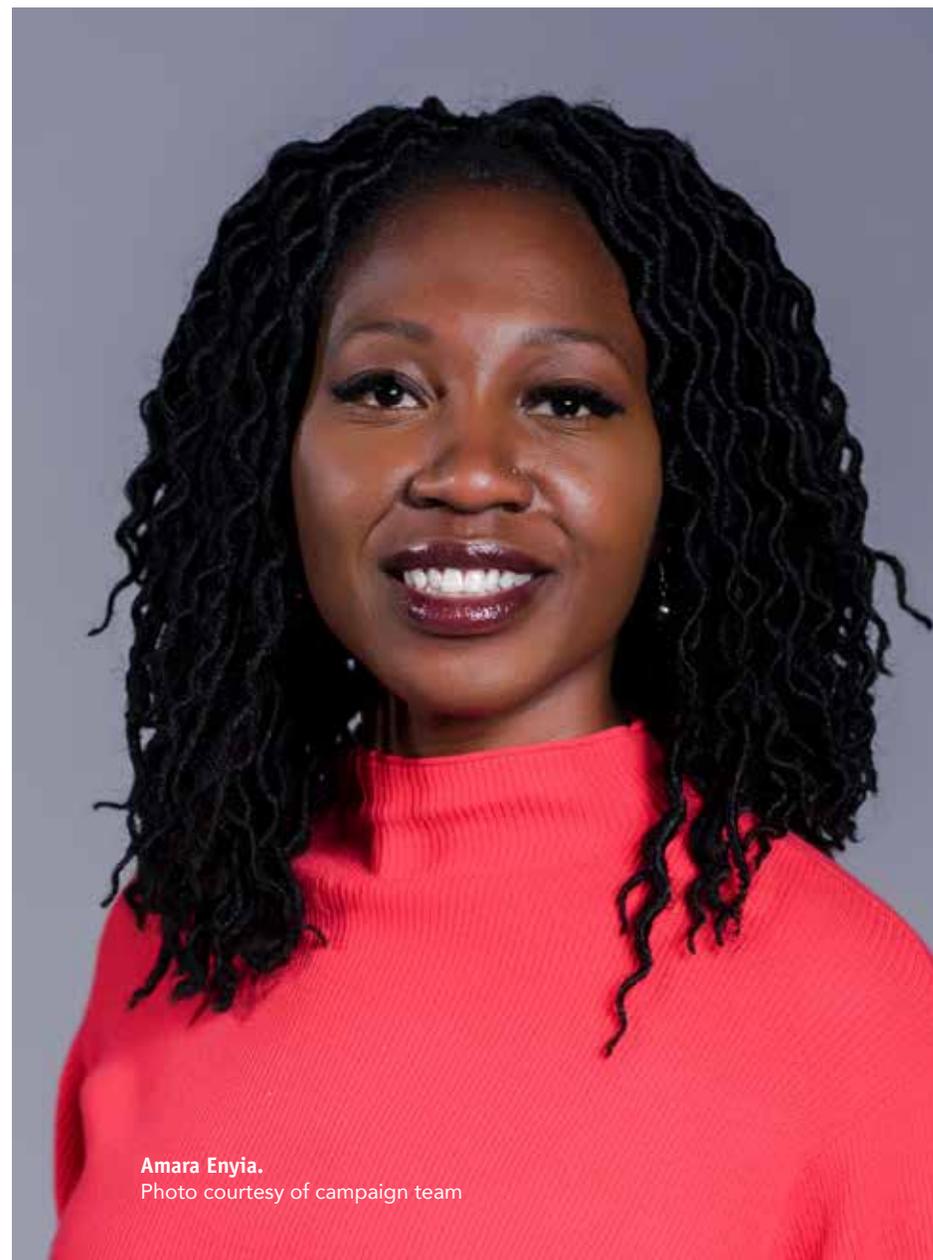
I'm probably the only candidate that can speak fluently on any area of policy from pension to housing to social security to environmental justice because I've worked in all those spaces. I've been criticized by people who actually support me because I rarely talk about my credentials, my educational background, because it's just never been something I talk about. A lot of my credentials and qualifications are questioned and I'm asked questions that you'd never ask a lot of these individuals that are already in office and have done far less.

**WCT: You've said in the past that the problem with leadership in the city is the lack of vision. How do you plan to work within the current political machine, or does it need to be completely reimaged? And what pushback do you anticipate from that?**

AE: I definitely think it needs to be reimaged. Whatever iteration of machine we have has led us to where we are today and all of the challenges that we're dealing with. It has clearly not worked. Chicagoans of all walks of life—rich, poor, every ethnicity—are saying they want something different; they need something different, that the status quo has not worked for the city. The only way to get something different is to do something different. We need a different kind of leadership that actually has a vision of what Chicago can be.

**WCT: Which is?**

AE: For me, that is a vision of a city that is governed by values of equity. We need to recognize



Amara Enyia.

Photo courtesy of campaign team

that our policies in the past have hurt some communities and residents, to the extent that we are experiencing significant population loss, to the extent that communities are dying on the vine due to the lack of economic investment. These are circumstances that were brought to us by the current class of leadership and they're all tied to the establishment ... or the machine, or whatever the label is.

**WCT: People are afraid of change. Even when it might benefit them.**

AE: And Chicagoans deserve better. A vision for Chicago is also a vision of innovation. There are so many ideas and solutions that our campaign has set forth that creates the kind of city that we need. We're not just poking around at the edges of the pension crisis or the revenue crisis—we're pushing a public bank for the city because we know that would be transformative in how the city operates, whether with infrastructure projects or being able to expand our small business sector by issuing low interest loans. We talk about the cooperative economy and how we can actually build generational wealth if we only

move down the road of creating worker-owned cooperatives across the city. We talk about different models of land ownership, community land trusts to protect affordability so people aren't getting displaced. These are the innovative ideas that are the hallmark of our vision and our platform and they're all doable.

**WCT: Chicago can be very much “this is the way that it's always been done and the way it has to be.”**

AE: Other cities are doing them but Chicago has not done any of these things because we're so mired in the Chicago way. That has been to our detriment, and what we're pushing is justice and innovation. “Justice” to address our failings in education and the economy that have created the disparities that we're seeing today. “Innovation” because these are fresh, bold ideas that can be truly transformative and, if implemented, can put this city on the right course for the next several generations.

**To learn more about Enyia's platform, visit: [amaraenyia.com/](http://amaraenyia.com/).**

ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# La Shawn Ford on Marshall Plan, LGBT issues

BY TIM PEACOCK

With a focus on fighting poverty, La Shawn Ford hopes to become the next mayor of Chicago. When he spoke with Windy City Times recently, he explained some of his plans for helping the middle class as well as his positions on key LGBTQ issues.

**Windy City Times: What was the defining moment that solidified your decision to run? Was there a single moment or cause that pushed you to run for mayor?**

La Shawn Ford: What really prompted me was community organizations asking me to run and saying that they wanted to get the petitions to help me run. So the grassroots movement on the South and West sides of Chicago did it. The ex-offender community, the LGBTQ community—there's just been a lot of people that have recognized the work, and they came out strong saying that they want to support me to run for mayor.

**WCT: The Marshall Plan—tell me more about it and how it sets you apart from other candidates.**

LSF: When I look at all of the other candidates that's in the race, which ultimately I had to make the final decision whether or not the grass roots movement would push me to run, looking at every candidate in the race, I don't think—and there's been no real indication that they understand the problems that are really impacting the city. And that is, the middle class and the people that are living in poverty are being left behind. And this city is constantly driving people into poverty.

And so the Marshall Plan will be sure to work with the federal/state government to have a capital bill to rebuild the communities that have been destroyed since the 1968 riots. We plan to make sure that the city of Chicago, every community, is thriving. I think that what the city has missed for so many years is a mayor that plans to work in the community like a mayor is supposed to. It's bigger than being worried about being an international city—we are that already. But what we need is a working mayor that that understands how to improve impoverished communities. And one that's not going to be tied to the democratic machine in any way that's going to force them to be compromised.

**WCT: What's your vision for the LGBTQ community?**

LSF: My position is to govern with people at the table, and nothing for the LGBTQ community without them being a part of the decision making. I supported the marriage equality bill—I supported and helped it pass. And how did I do that? I spoke with the LGBTQ community some, and I spoke with the people to help me advocate for the best bill for fairness and justice for that community. So my record reflects that I am supportive of that right, and there's no one else that voting record to prove it but me in this race.

**WCT: Do you have any other experience working in LGBTQ-related issues?**

LSF: I have people in my own family—my sister is gay and she's a strong adviser on issues as well. Even as a Catholic, I have been able to represent fairness and equality for people because I believe that that's what we should do with government. I'm always open to fairness and justice, and I've been meeting with the transgender community as well to make sure that we have protections for people from that community. I've worked with the Department of Corrections to make sure there's protections for transgender men and wom-

en in our Department of Corrections. I'm a strong supporter and a leader when it comes to making sure that we protect individual rights.

**WCT: While Chicago—as well as the state of Illinois—has strong anti-discrimination laws both to cover LGBTQ people as well as people of color, actual enforcement of those laws can be difficult. What would you do or change as mayor to ensure those laws are adequately enforced?**

LSF: You hear a lot about police training when it comes to dealing with African-Americans and other minorities. I think that police training has to be extended to the LGBTQ community and the transgender community as well. We have to make sure that the police have a renewed training as it relates to fairness and justice for all people. And that's where it lies; it lies with making sure that the city of Chicago understands that law enforcement must be well trained as it relates to all communities of people that they serve.

**WCT: What do you see as being the biggest problem facing the LGBTQ community, and how would you work as mayor to tackle that problem?**

LSF: What I see, basically, is making sure that the LGBTQ community has a real department and a place in city government. Because we have to look at this as a civil right and we have to make sure that we protect these communities. You have the different agencies and groups that look out for Blacks and Hispanics. ... We have to have something like that in city government to protect and have a platform in city government that's going to advise the mayor, that's going to advise the City Council, that's going to advise the Chicago police, that's going to have a network from the community that they meet with. I don't want to say cabinet, but there will be some type of appointment for that in city government.

**For more information on Ford's campaign, visit [www.fordforchicago.com](http://www.fordforchicago.com).**



La Shawn Ford.  
Photo courtesy of  
campaign team

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Lori Lightfoot talks LGBTQ policy, police accountability

BY TIM PEACOCK

Standing out in a crowd of qualified competitors can be difficult, but openly lesbian mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot is up to the challenge. As a Victory Fund- and Equality Illinois PAC-endorsed candidate with a comprehensive LGBTQ policy framework, she stands a chance not only of becoming Chicago's first openly gay mayor, but also becoming the first African-American woman elected to the role.

**Windy City Times (WCT): What made you decide to throw your hat into the ring in what was already a crowded race for mayor?**

Lori Lightfoot (LL): I got into the race because I saw that there's a lot of great things that were going on in the city, but the prosperity certainly wasn't spread evenly around the city's neighborhoods. And I saw too many families that looked like the family that I grew up in and individuals who look like me, and under similar circumstances, really struggling.

And that there was no real plan for those folks. There wasn't a plan to uplift the quality of life in neighborhoods, really comprehensively bring down the violence in ways that could stabilize communities. That we have too many neighborhoods that lacked good quality schools either at the elementary or high school level, and that the unemployment rate in many neighborhoods was in the high twenties, if not higher. And there are a number of other factors that made me see that there was a great need for a leader who is going to be independent, who is going to put forth a progressive vision for the city, and who is really truly going to put people first.

**WCT: Two of the top issues listed on your campaign website—stopping violence and reforming the police department—strongly connect to your previous role on the police accountability board. How would becoming mayor help you work toward those goals versus your time on the board?**

LL: When you work on a board, you have to live within that board's jurisdiction and area of responsibility—which in the police board was limited. We were essentially an administrative court and could only weigh in on topics that came before us. We had some ability to use the bully pulpit of that office to advocate for certain policy changes, but the jurisdiction was limited. Obviously, as mayor, I can break through a lot of the bureaucratic barriers and really compel change both in terms of reform and accountability in really improving the relationship between community and police. And also, in an important area of accountability, it's just unacceptable to me that we are spending so much money on lawsuits, settlements, judgments and attorney fees. And there doesn't seem to be a sense of urgency

around why that's a problem. Those are all things that can be addressed expeditiously if you're the mayor.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBTQ community?**

LL: I think that we've got a number of battles that we still need to fight. Getting marriage was really important from a practical standpoint and also from a symbolic standpoint, but we know that discrimination still runs rampant against members of our community. And of particular notoriety in the last year or so is what's going on with the trans community. We had two murders



Lori Lightfoot.  
Photo courtesy of  
campaign team

of trans women last year where those murders were not solved and frankly it doesn't sound like there's been significant progress.

We know that a significant portion of the homeless population are made up of LGBTQ+ young people. So we've got to make sure that we are doing everything that we can. We also know that there's unequal access to healthcare within our community—particularly for drugs that could mitigate against the spread of AIDS and HIV. So there's a lot more that needs to be done both to highlight these issues and frankly let people know that the struggle continues. I will also make sure, as a part of my administration, that we do a much better job of having liaisons that reach out to this community. That's an area

where I think we still have a long way to go—particularly when it comes to reaching out and having relationships between our community and the police department.

Right now there's only one LGBTQ+ liaison for the entire city. I recommend increasing that to three, and having them have specific geographic boundaries within which they work. We also need to make sure the administration, from top to bottom, in every department and not just in the human relations area, is populated with out proud LGBTQ members.

**WCT: You referenced liaisons, which is part of your LGBTQ policy framework. Another proposition in that policy framework is creating 24-hour drop-off centers. How would those work?**

LL: What we see—and this is a significant issue among our young people—is that they don't have a stable place to go to get resources, to have respite, to get food, to get shelter, and training, to connect with social services. And those needs are really 24 hours a day; they're not just during

our young people and our seniors. Those issues really overlap with issues that I've heard about from residents of the city all over and are not necessarily unique to the LGBTQ+ community.

**WCT: While Chicago does have anti-discrimination protections that are pretty robust, enforcement of those laws can be difficult. What would you do as mayor—aside from your LGBTQ policy framework—to more adequately enforce those laws not only to help the LGBTQ community, but other marginalized communities in the city?**

LL: Well I think number one, the mayor has to set the tone for the kind of city we want to have. The mayor has to speak the values of the collective, and talking about these issues in lots of different forums is critically important because it's going to be very clear that this is something that we value, this is something that is important to the health and well being of the city. And I think frankly that goes a long way in and of itself.

But of course we need to also educate people about what their rights are. No one's going to be

the daytime or early evening hours. So having 24 hour centers that can really help address the needs of our community is, I think, critically important.

**WCT: Do you see any other issues as being big problems facing the city's LGBTQ community within the next few years?**

LL: I think our issues are universal in some ways. There are things, of course, that are unique to our community given who are and given the level of discrimination that we continue to face, but people in our community also care about violence, they also care about good and safe schools, they also care about making sure that taxes are not regressive and that they have affordable housing options—particularly among

a better protector of your rights than you. And a lot of times what I hear from people is, "Well I didn't know where to turn, I wasn't sure if I could get help, I didn't actually know that I had a right to this, this and this." Educating people—particularly, young people—about what their rights are and what resources they have when they feel like their rights have been violated is critically important. And making sure people know about various advocacy groups that are out there and designed to protect the rights of marginalized communities or communities that have been subject to historic discrimination on the basis of a lot of different factors.

**For more information on Lightfoot's campaign, visit <https://lightfootforchicago.com/>.**

## ELECTIONS 2019: MAYOR

# Bob Fioretti seeks to be an LGBT ally in City Hall

BY TIM PEACOCK

In a recent interview, former 2nd Ward Ald. Robert “Bob” Fioretti told Windy City Times he wants to be “an ally in City Hall” if he becomes mayor of Chicago. Fioretti, a civil-rights attorney, focused on how to make the city more accessible to its citizens using his experience and knowledge of how City Hall works.

**Windy City Times: What made you decide to run for mayor again this year after your last campaign four years ago?**

Bob Fioretti: The problems that led me to run for alderman in 2007 haven’t been solved. Nobody is safer. The schools aren’t better. Taxes continue to rise but the city’s financial condition is worse. Many neighborhoods continue to suffer disinvestment. The other candidates are the people who’ve done nothing about these problems, or who created them in the first place. I feel I have to run, because I can get our city headed in the right direction.

**WCT: How do you propose solving the city’s pension problem? Is it as simple as the com-**

**muter tax you’ve proposed?**

BF: First of all, we must keep our promise to current city workers and retirees. They will get the benefits coming to them. Doing otherwise is not only immoral, but it’s also illegal. However, we may have to offer prospective city employees a lower level of retirement benefit, so that whatever taxes we impose to get over this hump can be reduced or repealed after a while. But it is a fact that we need \$400 million in new revenue by mid-September of this year, and that number will rise to \$1 billion by 2023.

A commuter tax would bring in most of that. It’s not a tax on business, it’s a tax on out-of-state and suburban residents who work in Chicago ... 800,000 of them. A 1-percent tax on their income—which would be deductible from their federal income tax—is reasonable. They could avoid the tax by living here. If the tax stabilizes city finances, it’ll attract business.

Other options, such as designating proceeds from legal marijuana sales or sports better, won’t generate much money. A casino could help, but I’ll believe it when I’m standing in it. A casino for

Chicago has been talked about in Springfield for 25 years, and it seems further from reality than it’s ever been. It’s not something we can rely on.

Any shortfall can be backstopped by un-spent money in TIF accounts, which is estimated at \$1.4 billion to \$1.7 billion. This is money already paid by taxpayers, and it’ll be at least partially replenished every year.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBTQ community?**

BF: Chicago’s population is declining. People moving away always happens, but we need more people moving in. For decades, Chicago has been a place that gay and lesbian people move to—from around the Midwest, around the country and even around the world. The gay and lesbian community here is an important part of our city. It’s part of the foundation. Where would we be without it?

And we are finding now that gays and lesbians are comfortable living and being “out” all over the city, not just in a handful of neighborhoods. This is good for the gay community and it’s good for Chicago. I want Chicago to continue to be a place that gays and lesbians find attractive, and I want that attractiveness and comfort to be city-wide.

**WCT: While Chicago has strong anti-discrimination protection laws, actual enforcement of those laws can be difficult. What would you do as mayor to ensure anti-discrimination laws are adequately enforced?**

BF: I’m a civil-rights lawyer. I have a sensitive

ear to these issues.

**WCT: What do you see as the biggest problem(s) facing the LGBTQ community? How would you work as mayor to help tackle that/those problem(s)?**

BF: Some of the biggest problems are bullying in school, and discrimination in housing, public accommodation and employment—not systematic and it’s inexcusable. Also, drug use—some people don’t want to admit it, but there’s a party drug subculture, and I’ve seen what it does to people over time. When users realize they have a problem and want to stop, we have to help them.

As far as city government directly goes, the people who deliver our city services cannot be prejudiced against any of the members of the public they encounter, including gays and lesbians and transgender people. This especially includes the police and fire departments, as well as public health and any social services, bureaucrats at City Hall, the auto pound, administrative hearing officers, CTA employees, and teachers and coaches in the schools and park district.

Also, city employees who are gay, lesbian and transgender should not have to tolerate bullying or ridicule from cave men who work in some city departments. This does happen, and we have to stop it.

**For more information about Fioretti’s campaign, visit [www.bobforchicago.com](http://www.bobforchicago.com).**



Bob Fioretti.  
Photo courtesy of  
campaign team

## ELECTIONS 2019: 31ST WARD

# Bird-Martinez vies for 31st Ward City Council spot

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Openly gay automotive software designer Colin Bird-Martinez is currently running to represent the 31st Ward in the Feb. 26 citywide elections. Bird-Martinez has done a great deal of activism work locally, and he now maintains that work can carry over to City Hall.

The 31st Ward, currently represented by incumbent Ald. Millie Santiago, includes parts of the Avondale, Belmont-Cragin, Hermosa, Logan Square and Portage Park neighborhoods.

**Windy City Times: What compelled you to run?**

Colin Bird-Martinez: I'm running because I love this community. My partner and I moved here from Logan Square about five years ago. We were honestly worried at first about a whole "traditional values" thing—the area is very Roman Catholic. But that stereotype ended up not being true at all. People were really happy that we moved to the community.

The reason I decided to run is that I've seen a lot of absenteeism from our alderman. Even in recent interviews, she said there's no gentrification in our community, and we know that it's not true. I know the names of people who've been pushed out. There's a lot of instability happening, particularly in my part of the community, Hermosa. We need new leadership that's going to pay particular attention to that, as well as lift up the voices of every one in the community. A lot of the people involved in my campaign are people I knew from community organizing—a lot of women, undocumented people, LGBT people. Those are the primary groups, and those we are trying to bring voices to in the campaign.

**WCT: Elaborate on some other issues you are concerned with.**

CBM: There are a lot of issues with education. Many of the people I meet send their kids [to school] outside the community. That's often a serious issue for families, so I want to fight for fully funding our schools and having an elected school board. I meet a lot of young people, particularly young men, who are a little lost about what to do after high school, so I want to make City Colleges free. People who are in gangs, or are former gang members, have said, "Had I known there were opportunities like this, I would not have joined a gang."

We've had a lot of different things we've canvassed on. This week's was about education. Last week's was about women's issues. My partner is a social worker, so a lot of the stuff that I care about has to do with social work.

Obviously crime is a number one issue as well. My opponents are focused on bringing even more cops in, and that ends up terrorizing more people, particularly young people and young men. I want to rebuild public trust. I was happy to see the consent decree passed; I was a supporter of that, but in the future I want to see more police

accountability through the [Civilian Police Accountability Ordinance]. I also want to promote mental health services for those who are victims of violence.

The most "kitchen sink" issue is constituent services. The alderman is ignoring a lot of issues and that's why a lot of people are wanting change.

**WCT: You have a long history of activism; speak a bit about that, and how much of that relates to the LGBT community specifically?**

CBM: When I moved here, my neighbors were really passionate about seeing change in the community but didn't know yet about how to bring it about. It lacked formal organization. In 2014, we co-founded the Hermosa Neighborhood Association. Just like the residents who co-founded that with me, I had no formal background in community organizing. But we've done incredible things, such as advocating for affordable housing, stopping to stop the expansion of charter schools that were affecting our community, and, our primary thing, getting people together for beautification. We planted close to 100 trees in the community and distributed rainwater barrels. The thing I'm most proud of is raising a quarter of a million dollars for a new playground.

I have a progressive political organization really involved in the campaign and am part of Reclaim Chicago, which [supports officials such as] Kim Foxx and Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, and [works on] fighting gender oppression and racial capitalism. Those values are imbued throughout our campaign. We are focused in getting young people to vote—the average age in this ward is 28. It's about getting people 18-24 to vote, women to vote, and having immigrant populations involved in the campaign, so they can hold me accountable as well, without being able to vote.

Out in the community, I think some people will admit to me that they are gay, and you can infer that they are not open in their home. Other people have told me that it takes a lot of courage [to be out] because it is a traditional-values ward, and they're surprised that I'd run. But I never get anything bad from people [while canvassing] at the doors. They're very excited by it. They're excited that somebody different would run. I work in very cis- white male spaces. Being in those spaces, I see a lot of positive change happening, and that's without my doing anything. So that's why I'm excited to be running in this ward—I think it will make a real impact on that as well.

**WCT: Are there other pertinent issues for the ward's LGBT residents?**

CBM: One thing is family acceptance programs. There's a strong Catholic population in the community, and a strong evangelical population as well. I want to support, through those family acceptance programs, the mental well-being of gay youth in our area, and their parents and families, to really understand. I think we should require all-gender restrooms in public buildings. I was



Colin Bird-Martinez.  
Photo courtesy of subject

also going to support bringing a new youth center, because we have nothing like that on the Northwest side, but I'm happy to say La Casa Norte is building one fairly near to us, which also has permanent housing for gay youth. But we need more of that. I don't know how to do it yet,

but I'd also like to support getting a gay bar or club into the area. There used to be one in Hermosa—the only one between here, Boystown and Oak Park, but it closed down. I think that would be a better presence in this area.

See [colinforchicago.com](http://colinforchicago.com).

## ELECTIONS 2019: 33RD WARD

# Lesbian alderperson Deb Mell talks feats, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Deb Mell has been the 33rd Ward alderman since 2013 and previously served in the Illinois General Assembly as a representative for the 40th District.

Prior to being an elected official, Mell worked for Christy Webber Landscapes. She was a member of Equal Marriage Now in the mid-2000s and participated in protest actions that led to her arrest in front of the Cook County headquarters. Mell's arrest made the news due to her father's and brother-in-law's (former Ald. Dick Mell and Gov. Rod Blagojevich, respectively) political positions at the time and led to her running for office following a training session with the Victory Fund.

She is running against challengers Katie Sieracki and Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez.

**Windy City Times: Why should people vote for you again and not your two challengers?**

Deb Mell: I have proven myself as an independent progressive voice that gets things done. I have led on issues from affordable housing and reform to taking on abuses in the TIF system. I have also secured incredible improvements to our public parks. My staff is great and knows how to work with the community on solving problems big and small. The ward has big challenges ahead and we have the infrastructure, relationships, passion and knowledge to move our ward forward. I have a reputation for having a transparent and accessible ward office that listens to constituents.

**WCT: What are the most pressing issues for the 33th Ward and how would you address them?**

DM: The rising cost of living and the need for additional resources to combat displacement is critical. The impact on our local neighborhood schools has been devastating. We must expand and preserve affordable housing and pass new tenant protections.

Public safety is another big concern. It is an important part of the job and I embrace an all-of-the-above approach that includes expanding social services, revamped community policing, empowering young people and taking a proactive approach to dealing with troubled buildings that contribute to gang violence.

**WCT: In what ways have you advanced LGBT equality during your time as alderman?**

DM: I helped pass a bill that ensures CPS students can use restrooms that matches their gender identity. I have signed many resolutions reaffirming Chicago as an LGBT-friendly city. I have worked to strengthen the LGBT caucus and let our voice be heard on important issues of the day.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

DM: I want our community to experience more equality in every aspect of life. I am so encouraged by this previous election and the rainbow wave we witnessed. We need to recruit more openly LGBT people to run for public office. There needs to be more acceptance of our trans brothers and sisters. We should be free to live our lives, start a family, support our community and contribute to society without facing discrimination.

**WCT: Do you have any openly LGBT people working on your staff? Campaign?**

DM: Not on my staff, but they are a part of my campaign.

**WCT: HIV prevention and awareness are still important issues for the community. What have you done since becoming alderman regarding this issue? How will you use your role going forward to address it?**

DM: We try and generate a lot of awareness in the community on public health matters. We hold regular health fairs with a range of services like HIV testing. Our office also participates in events hosted by Howard Brown Health and Center on Halsted. We were big proponents of the city's first LGBT Databook, which was a great first step in the city toward collecting important data on health disparities. It was an enormous achievement for Chicago.

**WCT: Do you back an elected school board? Should the CEO have education experience?**

DM: Yes to both.

**WCT: What are your recommendations for better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?**

DM: We need a well-trained, accountable and more diverse police force that can earn the trust of our most vulnerable residents. With better training, I am hopeful we can restore trust with those residents who have suffered abuse and reduce the staggering amount we pay in settlements.

The FOP [Fraternal Order of Polic] also needs to negotiate in good faith and accept that there will be changes to police contracts. Having officers that truly understand the needs of every community is vital. We have to address the issue of trans people being murdered. The trans community experiences violence at alarming levels. We need a public awareness campaign and more training and attention from our police department regarding the trans community.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**



Ald. Deb Mell.  
Photo courtesy of campaign team

DM: Fifteen dollars an hour.

**WCT: How should Chicago increase its revenue stream?**

DM: A state-wide progressive income tax, legalizing cannabis, gambling at airports and a real estate transfer tax are some ideas. We must scale back regressive fines, fees and taxes. We

must also hold Springfield more accountable and I am optimistic they will do more with the new administration.

**WCT: Are you currently backing anyone for mayor?**

DM: No.

See <https://www.debfor33.com/>.

## ELECTIONS 2019: 35TH WARD

# Seeking second term, Ramirez-Rosa promotes economic reform

BY TIM PEACOCK

Seeking a second term serving Chicago's 35th Ward, Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa offered Windy City Times a bold vision for the next four years. In a recent interview, he spoke about the issues facing his ward and the city, how economic reform could help the LGBTQ community and more.

**Windy City Times: What factors motivated you to seek reelection for alderman of the 35th Ward?**

Carlos Ramirez-Rosa: I love the city of Chicago, and I got involved in politics because I know that our working families are suffering. I know that our immigrant families are suffering. I know that our trans sisters and brothers are under attack. And so, my involvement in public service is about moving forward our movement for social and economic justice.

Moving forward our fight to see a world where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. That's why I ran for alderman, and that's why I'm running for reelection. As 35th Ward alderman, I'm very proud that alongside my colleagues in the LGBT caucus, we removed the prohibition on our trans sisters and brothers being able to use the bathroom of their choice. And now in the city of Chicago our trans sisters and brothers and friends can use the bathroom of their choice without fear of discrimination. I'm very proud of the fact that we passed legislation in the city of Chicago—legislation that I was the lead sponsor on—to ensure that our immigrant sisters and brothers and friends could not be abused or coerced based upon their perceived immigration or nationality status.

So this is exactly the type of legislation we need to be passing in this moment of Donald Trump's right-wing presidency and his effort to take us backwards. But we're not done. And I think one of the greatest accomplishments in our progressive movement is that Mayor Rahm Emanuel is now out. We now have an opportunity to pass a lot of the legislation that I have been fighting for over the last four years that was blocked by that administration.

**WCT: What would you say are the biggest issues facing the 35th Ward right now and what steps would you take to address those issues if re-elected?**

CRR: We have to understand that our ward—and wards across the city—are gerrymandered. Right, so we have wards across the city that are gerrymandered and the issues impacting the 35th Ward don't stop at the boundary between one ward and the other. The issues impacting our ward are underfunded schools, a lack of investment to address public safety issues, regressive taxation that is driving working people out of

the city, corporate handouts in the form of TIF [tax-increment financing] largesse and a lack of investment in our neighborhoods whether that be city services or issues related to public safety or to our public schools.

For the past four years, I have been fighting as a member of the progressive caucus and as one of the most independent and bold progressive voices on the council board. To make sure that we're taxing the rich. To make sure that we are ending the handouts that come through TIF funds that go to some of the mayor's biggest donors. I'm very proud of the track record that I have as it relates to fighting for working families. And I think, in terms of addressing the issues in the 35th Ward, it's going to come down to continuing to fight at City Hall to make sure that we are fully funding our schools, and we're funding job programs, after school programs and that we're funding neighborhood investment.

**WCT: You were one of the first openly gay Latino aldermen in Chicago, giving you unique intersectional insight into the way government works. What do you see as being the most pressing issues for the LGBTQ community both within the 35th Ward and around the city?**

CRR: One of the issues we face is a continued lack of funding to ensure that we have outreach not just around health services, but also around mental health issues. The city closed down six mental-health clinics, claiming they didn't have enough money to provide the funding to keep those open. And that has had an impact on our community. I actually speak to parents who say, "Look, my child is trans and they would like to begin the process of transitioning but I don't know where to turn to."

While Howard Brown is a tremendous important service that our community has, it's hard to get to for a lot of our LGBTQ sisters and brothers and friends outside of Boystown—outside of the Lake View community. I think that we need to ensure we increase funding to ensure that there's outreach in every single part of the city to meet the needs of the LGBTQ community. I think it's also important we understand that the issues that are impacting working Chicagoans are the same issues that impact all LGBTQ Chicagoans. Our LGBTQ seniors need affordable housing. Our LGBTQ young people need fully funded public schools that provide that provide them with after school programs that can often be extremely critical to provide them with a safe space to learn and grow and be themselves.

**WCT: Homeless LGBTQ youth are a big focus in one Chicago mayoral candidate's LGBTQ policy framework. She's proposing 24-hour drop-off centers at Chicago public schools. What kind of engagement could the 35th Ward expect from you in helping LGBTQ youth (homeless or otherwise) and what ideas do you have to address the problem?**

CRR: I've spoken up boldly for the need for progressive taxation. One of the issues the city

of Chicago faces is we have a massive pension obligation that we need to meet while at the same time we need continue to be able to provide the city services that taxpayers deserve and expect. And the question then is, how do we then also fund the things that the community needs? For example, the services and support for LGBTQ youth. So that is why I support progressive taxation, and in my second term I am really fighting to make sure we are doing things like passing a commercial lease tax for downtown.

In the island of Manhattan, the city of New York has a commercial lease tax, and if you have a corporate lease for one of the skyscrapers in downtown Manhattan, you pay a tax on that lease. These are major law firms, these are major corporations that are renting out that space. And this actually generates \$800 million a year for New York City. If we were to structure something similar, it would generate \$200-300 million a year by asking those corporations downtown to pay an additional tax. We also need to enact TIF reform. Last year TIF siphoned off about \$660 million—that should have gone to public services—into special funds that the mayor then uses as his piggy bank. What I would like to see is substantive TIF reform, I would like to see progressive revenue, I would like a commercial lease tax for downtown. And with the money in place, I will then be fighting to ensure that our LGBTQ community gets its fair share. But also that we understand that fairness comes in the form of equity. And that means that we have to be funding these services to ensure that we are addressing the issues impacting LGBTQ youth, our seniors, and the population as a whole.

**More about Alderman Ramirez-Rosa's campaign is at <http://www.carlosrosa.org/>.**



**Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.**  
Photo by Matt Simonette

## ELECTIONS 2019: 40TH WARD

# Andre Vasquez on reasons for running, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The son of Guatemalan immigrants, Andre Vasquez was born and raised in Chicago and is currently an AT&T area manager for Illinois. To give back to his community, Vasquez became a leader within Reclaim Chicago developing community and political events in the 40th Ward. Vasquez is running for the 40th Ward aldermanic seat against incumbent Patrick J. O'Connor and fellow challengers Maggie O'Keefe, Ugo Okere and Dianne Daleiden.

**Windy City Times: Your campaign website talks about replacing machine politics with movement politics. What does that mean to you?**

Andre Vasquez: Historically, Chicago's machine politics have been funded by big donors who do not serve the interest of working class Chicagoans. Movement politics puts people inside that vehicle of power. Building a community where engagement is encouraged, opening access for people to meet regularly, and holding their elected officials accountable.

**WCT: What are the most pressing issues for the 40th ward and how would you address them?**

AV: Constituent services, economic development and affordable housing. Currently, only if you live close to the alderman will your issues be addressed, and that is wrong. Everyone should be serviced equally no matter where they live in the ward and it is something I am committed to doing, as well as developing local independent businesses in the empty storefronts across the ward. In terms of affordable housing, we cannot be afraid of increasing density. I am advocating for 30 percent affordable housing in city subsidized units.

**WCT: What has been your experience with the LGBT community?**

AV: I have evolved from where I was growing up as a street kid and a rapper in an artform that was plagued by toxic masculinity, misogyny and homophobia. My experience working in many roles where I was exposed to LGBT people who were living their authentic lives taught me to be more understanding and aware of my past mistakes. I do have a lot of regrets for the way I behaved when I was younger.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

AV: I have grown to understand how difficult and oppressive society can be for any marginalized community, including LGBT people. I would love to work with community organizations to learn about and advocate for LGBT-specific needs. I am running to create a world where everyone can live as their true self. I would also like more LGBT history education in our public schools, be-

cause I believe that when we learn more about our shared experience, we see the common bonds that build community.

**WCT: Are any of your campaign staffers openly LGBT?**

AV: My campaign manager and a number of our volunteer team are.

**WCT: HIV prevention and awareness are still important issues for the community. How would you address this if you are elected?**

AV: The funding cuts that were made under previous administrations must be reversed. Next, we need to make sure we are equitably funding comprehensive awareness and prevention campaigns

cross the city, not just the North Side.

**WCT: Do you back an elected school board?**

AV: Yes, with a [school board] president who is a certified teacher with classroom experience.

**WCT: Tell me about this Civilian Police Accountability Council you are proposing. How will this affect people of color and the transgender community?**

AV: It is similar to an elected school board, civilians investigate all complaints levied against the police. If you are a Black trans woman who was being harassed by an officer you currently have to identify yourself to file a complaint. That places a target on the back of someone who is already profiled at a higher rate. We need to modernize tracking complaints against law enforcement. Also, police officers should not get any lead time before answering for any possible wrongdoing on their part.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

AV: Fifteen dollars an hour and indexed to inflation/rising living costs

**WCT: How should Chicago increase its revenue stream?**

AV: TIF money should not be going to development projects in the Loop and surrounding neighborhoods. They are intended for blighted areas. TIF surpluses should be directed to city needs, not mayoral discretion. We also need to ensure that large corporations pay their fair share.

**WCT: Are you currently backing anyone for mayor?**

AV: No.

**WCT: Why should people vote for you instead of the incumbent or other challengers?**

AV: The incumbent has been there for 35 years, ran for office originally to resist Mayor Washington's agenda, does not want to represent our neighbors and he is on record in that regard. The ward is ready for a change in leadership; one that is transparent and accountable. Among the other challengers, this campaign has the largest volunteer base and I have personally out canvassed everyone. I am the only challenger in the race that has career experience managing something of this scale, and we are the best shot at unseating the incumbent. It is time for an ethical upgrade that I will bring to the city council.

See <https://andrefor40th.com/>.



Andre Vasquez.

Photo by Valerie Miles-Vasquez

## ELECTIONS 2019: 44TH WARD

# Tom Tunney on accomplishments, LGBT issues, Wrigley Field

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Tom Tunney has been alderman of Chicago's 44th Ward—which includes Lake View—for more than 15 years, and was the first openly gay person elected to city council. Tunney (also known as the owner of the Ann Sather restaurants) currently chairs the council's Committee on Economic, Capital, and Technology Development.

Tunney recently talked with Windy City Times about his accomplishments, crime in the ward and LGBT issues.

**Windy City Times: You have been at the forefront of LGBT issues for quite some time.**

Tom Tunney: It's been about 40 years! [I've been involved] since 1980—pre-AIDS diagnosis.

I was going through some old photos from early IMPAACT dinners from the early '80s—I was the fundraising chair. But I have to say I like what I do; it's the whole issue of community.

**WCT: What are two or three of your accomplishments that you're proudest of?**

TT: Before I talk about accomplishments, I think breaking the glass ceiling as an openly gay elected official—obviously, Larry McKeon preceded me but it's pretty amazing that we now have gone from one to five [LGBT] members on city council.

I think the most important accomplishment within the LGBT community is the whole redevelopment of Addison and Halsted. You were around when they were going to close the old 23rd District police station; that would've been devastating to the community. The re-use of the old station, after we landmarked it... Ann Sather was historically a community center for many, many years, and to be instrumental in that whole [redevelopment] project and to work with Gov. George Ryan and [others] to make sure that the center was built and open was amazing.

That was phase one. Phase two was that whole LGBT senior housing and the re-use of the police station. When I see how much work was done by the community, and with me as alderman, it's just breathtaking.

**WCT: Your ward is seen as one of the more progressive in Chicago. What else do you feel should be done for LGBTs in that ward—or should the focus be on the community as a whole?**

TT: Yes, and yes. It's about community, but the LGBT senior housing was instrumental and is being modeled in other parts of the city. The other part is the youth and what we've done with The Crib [the part of The Night Ministry that focuses on people 18-24], working with Howard Brown and Broadway Youth Center—affordable housing and shelter for youth. To realize that 50-60 percent of the homeless youth population is identified as LGBTQ—that's crazy. Families forcing

youth out—that's reality, unfortunately.

I'm not even going down the road with Trump. Let's say Hillary was the president—the importance of education in our curriculum, and just raising healthy families. This whole situation with Trump is just [sad], rolling back civil rights, employment rights and the military. If and when he's no president, you'll see a swing back.

We still have, as [former Windy City Times Publisher] Tracy Baim would say, an affordable-housing crisis for everybody. But it's about protecting youth, educating society, and giving parents and families the positive role models they need. These people are our future, and we need to con-



Ald. Tom Tunney.  
Photo by Matt Simonette

tinue investing in our youth and protecting our most vulnerable people, who are seniors.

**WCT: Another issue that's come up in your ward is crime. How safe would you say your ward is?**

TT: Our ward is safe, and I think that our stats validate that. However, we're seeing (and you're seeing it on the news) are things like carjackings. The crimes that are happening in our neighborhoods tend to be crimes of opportunities, like cellphones being ripped off; you see so many open garages sometimes. So there's this false sense of security in this city, and some people feel like it should be like Des Moines, Iowa. This is a big city and there are plenty of good people—but there are also some bad people. People in areas like Gold Coast, Bucktown and North Center are not as safe as some would like them to be. But we've added police and now we have that

spotter technology.

**WCT: I have to ask about the Ricketts family. [Editor's note: The family, which owns the Chicago Cubs, has been very vocal in criticizing Tunney.] Laura Ricketts wrote an op-ed in Crain's...**

TT: ... And I responded.

**WCT: And you responded. But for those who don't know, she said that you are a rubber stamp for the mayor, among other things. How do you respond to their charges?**

TT: First of all, I have a lot of respect for the Ricketts family. Rebuilding that stadium [Wrigley Field]—we've bent over backward to accommodate the Cubs and that family, and their investment in our neighborhood. My job is to manage the interest of the residents. My belief is that the Ricketts will never stop until they control the alderman and the neighborhood.

I have to work with developments of all sizes and shapes, and maintain the integrity and vitality of Lake View; they'd take over Boystown if they could. But their interest in my voting record pales next to their self-interest in protecting their investment—and they are making a whole

I honestly think that, as much as I knew about Lake View and Chicago prior to being an alderman, you need one or two terms to get your feet firmly settled. We couldn't have gotten Addison and Halsted as well as Wrigley Field done if there was a two-term limit.

This is a full-time job but I also work hard at Ann Sather. I work there as well, but look at my attendance and voting records. You can't phone it in with this neighborhood—no frickin' way.

**WCT: Los Angeles is larger than Chicago, but only has 15 people in its city council. Does Chicago need 50 in its city council?**

TT: Los Angeles runs its government as a county-wide system. We have 17 Cook County commissioners. Our description is different than L.A.'s. We are responsible for every inch of our ward—safety, sanitation, cleanliness. We have 50 aldermen because we're the boots on the ground; we're the voices of the residents.

I'm not opposed to reducing the number, but I'm not opposed to changing the job description, either.

We've been losing population. So I think we should reduce the size based on population

bunch of money, with the support of the alderman.

Go to Clark and Addison; there's been so much work done there, and it's been transformed. We hope to make it a 360 environment.

**WCT: It's definitely changed—although, as a minor side note, I know people who are upset that the Taco Bell is gone.**

TT: Well, Taco Bell is coming back. I believe it is coming back to that intersection. You can be the first to leak it! But there are some people who feel we've given too much to the Cubs, and that [the area] is becoming a theme park.

**WCT: Term limits for alderpersons?**

TT: I don't believe in term limits. I believe that every four years, you're term-limited. You produce for your community and city, and you stand by your record.

trends, maintaining the same number of residents (60,000 or so)—and adjust based on the demographics.

**WCT: Is the LGBT Caucus still a united front? There have been reports of conflicts between [Ald. Raymond] Lopez and [Ald. Carlos] Ramirez-Rosa.**

TT: Look at the nature of the LGBT elected officials: We come from different neighborhoods and backgrounds. In a city that's dynamic, you have individuals who are dynamic.

I think it's actually beneath both of them to go after each other; let them each do what they need to do to get elected. I don't criticize any alderman, whether they're gay or straight. I'm not screaming about Ed Burke; he has to defend his record.

See <https://www.tomtunney.com>.

## ELECTIONS 2019: 44TH WARD

# Austin Baidas on challenging Tunney for council seat

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Lake View Austin Baidas is attempting to do something few have tried over the past 15 years: unseat Tom Tunney as 44th Ward alderman.

Baidas—who, like Tunney is openly gay—has been known for his philanthropic work (sitting on the boards of Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health) as well as having positions within the administrations of former Gov. Pat Quinn and President Barack Obama.

He recently talked with Windy City Times about qualifications, term limits and the Ricketts family—with whom people have tried establishing a connection.

**Windy City Times: How visible do you feel your campaign is? I feel that I see a lot more signs for the incumbent in this neighborhood.**

Austin Baidas: We have opened a campaign office at 3127 N. Broadway, so we have street visibility there. We have a strong presence on social media. Also, we're out canvassing the neighborhood, talking to people—getting up at 7 a.m. talking the residents, and they're absolutely wonderful. People want to have conversations about the government.

**WCT: This ward is known as one of the most progressive in the city. What else do you feel can be done to help the LGBT community here?**

AB: We need an alderman who represents those progressive values. I've been running on family and medical leave, a \$15 minimum wage and ending TIF districts so we're not diverting funds away from the services that people care about.

**WCT: You actually supported the incumbent—for a while, at least; until 2015, you donated to Citizens for Tunney. What do you feel he's doing wrong now?**

AB: When he was appointed alderman in 2002, it was a big step forward for the gay community. We had representation on city council; I respect that, and that's an important piece of our history.

Now it's time to move forward, and this is our opportunity with a new mayor. We can change things; we can fight corruption and insider deals, and we can actually have a government that represents the city we want.

**WCT: Do you favor term limits for alderpersons?**

AB: Yes—and I think we should change the name from “aldermen” to “alderpersons,” by the way. [Smiles] I think they should be limited to two terms in office, and we should have fresh ideas in city council. There are a lot of smart people in the city; we should have a democracy here. We shouldn't have career politicians.

**WCT: Should city council be reduced from 50 alderpersons?**

AB: So, I think the important thing is that neighbors have an alderman who's representative of them. I think that, for democracy to work, someone has to be able to have conversations with people in the neighborhood. So it's import-

ant for us in Lake View to have a voice in city council.

Aldermen currently represent about 55,000 people each. Can they represent, say, 80,000 people? That's very possible—but representing, say, 500,000 people could prevent neighbors' in-



Austin Baidas.  
Photo courtesy of subject

dividual voices from being heard at city council.

**WCT: So the number could be reduced?**

AB: Chicago has a large city government. The districts should be a size that residents can still have relationships with their aldermen. I'm fine with 50, but I'm also fine with discussions about reducing the size of city council.

**WCT: There have been a lot of discussions about the Ricketts family—that they're backing you. Are they backing you or will they back you?**

AB: I have not been endorsed by the Ricketts. I have not accepted any money from the Ricketts, nor will accept any money from the Ricketts. More importantly, I have no business interests with the Ricketts. I am running for alderman solely to be the representative of the residents of Lake View. I've also taken a pledge not to accept corporate donations or donations from PACs—or donations from right-wing billionaires. [Editor's note: A list of Baidas' donors can be found at <https://illinoisunshine.org/committees/34833/>.]

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**WCT: Please talk a little about what you've done for the LGBT community.**

AB: [Laughs] I'll end up talking a lot about what I've done.

I started my career in the business community. During the great recession in 2008, I saw a number of my friends get hit hard, and that drove me to work in government. I went to work for Barack Obama at the Department of Transportation, and I also worked a couple different jobs with the State of Illinois, including being associate budget director.

When I first got involved in government, it was

of Howard Brown Health, and that's an amazing organization that provides healthcare to over 30,000 residents. The key thing with Howard Brown Health is that it's culturally competent healthcare. LGBT people can feel comfortable talking with their doctors about issues important to them.

One of my current frustrations with the alderman is that he voted for the \$5.6-million tax break for Presence Health [Illinois' largest Catholic health system], which follows strict religious doctrine. So a rape victim taken to their emergency room will not be given emergency contraception, and they don't offer abortion care, stem-cell research

to do practical things—find deficiencies, save money, make the government run better—but I was also able to see the power of the government to change lives. In 2013, I was the highest-ranking openly gay member of the governor's office, and I got to work with an incredible team of activists to help pass marriage equality. Seven months after we passed marriage equality, my uncles—who just celebrated their 35th anniversary together—came to Chicago to get married. It was incredibly powerful to see family members who called my uncle's partner his “roommate” come together to support, recognize and celebrate their relationship.

Directly in the community, I've participated in AIDS Rides, and I spent eight years on the board of directors at Center on Halsted—and one accomplishment was building the LGBT senior apartments, thanks to a grant from the State of Illinois that we were able to secure.

I also have served on the board of directors

or in vitro fertilization. Howard Brown is fighting every day to make sure there's LGBT-competent healthcare in Chicago, and when you're voting to give a tax break to an organization that doesn't follow our values, I think that's wrong.

**WCT: What do you feel are your greatest strength in this race and your biggest weakness?**

AB: So I think this is a chance for Chicago to get the government we want, with a new mayor coming in and new city council members—to get a government that represents our community. It's time for Chicagoans to say “enough is enough.” Our greatest strength is that we can change the city.

My biggest weakness is that this is my first time running for political office. I'm not a career politician or a polished speaker—I'm Austin. What you see is what you get.

Visit <https://www.austinbaidas.com>.

## ELECTIONS 2019: 47TH WARD

# Angie Maloney discusses hope for 47th Ward aldermanic post

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Educator Angie Maloney, who is one of several openly LGBT candidates running in the Feb. 26 citywide elections, hopes to win the 47th Ward city council post that's currently held by Aameya Pawar, who has mounted a run for the City Treasurer job. Maloney is competing in an extremely crowded race, and has said that affordable housing in the area is one of her main concerns.

**Windy City Times: Why did you decide to run for city council?**

Angie Maloney: As a longtime resident of the ward, I'd become concerned that the neighborhood has become a place that is not accessible to middle-class residents. It's always been a great place to love. I've lived here for 20 years. It's been very safe, with great access to transportation and walkable to small businesses. But in the past 5-10 years, it's become increasingly unaffordable. I don't think it's as welcoming a place as it used to be.

**WCT: Did anything specifically motivate you further?**

AM: The rampant de-conversion of two-flats into single family homes. When my partner and I went to purchase a home, we saw the two-flat as the only affordable option in our community. With developers purchasing two-flats and de-converting them to \$2 million homes, we saw our pathway to home ownership slipping away. We talked to residents and heard stories from them, and they felt that, either for this reason, or different reasons, this place is longer welcoming to them.

**WCT: Are there other issues beyond affordability?**

AM: Locally, it's going to be affordability that's key. We live in really safe place. The schools are great. So we have to keep an eye on those things and improve quality of schools for kids all across the city. I'm a teacher, so I've seen how many families without resources don't get the same attention for their schools. Similarly, with safety, there are a lot of places in the city that have a lot of crime, and also don't have the best relationship with our police force. So improving both safety and schools across the country has to be a priority.

**WCT: You've pledged to increase government transparency, a promise many politicians make. How do you foresee yourself doing that?**

AM: I would be upfront with folks about why I made certain votes and be willing to explain them. I would be willing to let people know the trade-offs that come from voting a certain way, or the collaborations or coalitions that I was building in order to improve our conditions and get things done in the city. Obviously, I would be available in my office and welcome feedback from

residents and do participatory budgeting. I'd also solicit input—not just waiting for input to come to me—by reviving the precinct captain program.

**WCT: You've already spoken a bit about safety. What are your recommendations to bring about better relations between Chicago Police and residents they serve, specifically persons of color and members of the transgender community, who have had issues with being over-policed in the past?**

AM: There's a lot of rebuilding of trust that needs to happen. It's not a one-way street. ...

It starts by taking a therapist's approach, where we foster listening sessions and keep an eye on the fact that the police's voices have been the most-amplified in the past. I would like to an era of empathic listening sessions. Having police accountability oversight would be a mechanism that would make citizens feel like someone [who understands] their own perspective is watching the proceedings. Getting police and civilians in communication when it's not just crisis moments is also important.

**WCT: What are the most pertinent issues for LGBT persons residing in the ward?**

AM: There's still a lot of discrimination. People often don't want to discriminate, but there can be some latent discrimination. I went to a seniors' forum and I got some feedback that a lot of people liked me, but that they were "hesitant" because of the LGBT thing. That actually took me by surprise. ... Keeping the area affordable for artists and other non-conforming folks is key for a number of people. In our area, beyond that, I think we have the same issues everybody else

has—property taxes or rent, making sure we're safe walking down the street. We appreciate that there's low physical crime and low violent crime.

**WCT: What do you think is an appropriate minimum wage for Chicago residents?**

AM: I think \$15 sounds like a lot to people when you have to start a business. But if you look at the facts, most minimum wage recipients are women and women of color, so I think it is important that we talk about who we are raising wages for before we talk about amounts. I think \$15 is a good place to be.

**WCT: What are your thoughts on the current state of the City Council?**

AM: I think we're at a healing crisis point. It's time to grow. It's time to clean up. I'm someone who's honest to my core, and I'm also a relationship-builder. I'm ready to go in there and hold people accountable, but not in such a way that they turn away; it will be a way that will hopefully inspire people's integrity and use the best of themselves to serve.

See [iam47.org](http://iam47.org).

Angie Maloney.  
Photo courtesy of subject



## ELECTIONS 2019: 48TH WARD

# Ald. Harry Osterman shares priorities for ward

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

Harry Osterman has been alderman for the 48th Ward since 2011, serving parts of Andersonville, Uptown and Edgewater. For 11 years before being elected alderman, Osterman was the state representative for the 14th District.

Growing up in Edgewater, Osterman is the son of community activist and alderwoman Kathy Osterman, who was inducted posthumously into The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame as a “friend of the community” in the ‘90s. Osterman himself is a self-described “strong supporter of the LGBTQ community” and, over the course of his political career, has introduced a resolution calling for the end of the ban on blood donations from gay men and supported marriage equality.

**Windy City Times: What words would you use to describe the 48th Ward?**

Ald. Harry Osterman: I think, “inclusive” and “diverse.” Our community’s always been a place that welcomes people from every background, every religion, every sexual orientation. It’s very much in the DNA of who we are as a community. I try to use my leadership role to help foster that within our community: a place where everyone feels welcome and safe.

**WCT: What are some of your favorite activities that you like to do with your family in the ward?**

Osterman: We live in an amazing community. Last weekend, my wife and I went up to Andersonville; just walking on a warm, winter day, going to businesses and having lunch. Our three wonderful kids are a little older and can be by themselves, but we use the Broadway Armory Park, a building [in which] I worked to provide more programs for young people and for seniors. So, I try to not get in my car as much as possible in the community, whether it’s riding on the lakefront in summertime or going to the beach that’s named after my mom. I try to make sure to remind folks to spend money locally to help the businesses that make our neighborhood what it is.

**WCT: Speaking of your mother, how has her activism influenced your own, and what do you do to honor her in that regard?**

Osterman: As a young teenager growing up in

the ‘80s, I saw her advocacy for the Human Rights Ordinance for city council to gain protection for the gay and lesbian community that weren’t there before. And I saw her work with people from a broad spectrum to get that passed.

So that’s been an inspiration to me. In addition to calling people when I was an Alderman to pass marriage equality, we passed the Human Rights Act with protections to LGBT community early in my tenure in Springfield. I’ve always remembered that, always remembered the community and their support of her.

**WCT: What would you say is your vision for the LGBTQ community in 2019?**

Osterman: I want to make sure that our community continues to be diverse and that’s also with housing. Looking down the road, trying to create some LGBTQ senior housing in our community, so that people who live here don’t get forced out because of high property taxes. [Another] significant thing is the new report that came out on health within the LGBTQ community, which was a really good blueprint for future health for the community moving forward...trying to analyze that. We’re going to have a new mayor and new leadership in the city council. Part of my goal is to make sure that with that transition, those findings and goals on health don’t fall by the wayside as we look for funding priorities for people living with HIV and AIDS, anti-bullying programs and programs for youth.

**WCT: And your thoughts on mandatory LGBT-inclusive education in Chicago public schools? While I think it kind of speaks to what you were saying in terms of making sure everybody feels safe in the environment that they’re in, I think historical representation and inclusion is a part of that, which actually influences the ability to feel safe.**

Osterman: I totally agree. It’s making sure everyone understands who everyone else is and respecting who they are as people. The state of Illinois, if I’m not mistaken, passed a law this last year that would require more education be provided about LGBTQ historic events within the curriculum.

See <https://harryosterman.org>. Read the full Osterman interview at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



Ald. Harry Osterman.  
Photo by Andrew Davis

## ELECTIONS 2019: 48TH WARD

# David Earl Williams III challenges incumbent

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

David Earl Williams III was born in Evanston and grew up in Uptown, attending Senn High School in the 48th ward. In 2014, he ran as a Republican for U.S. House to represent the 9th District and he previously sought the Libertarian nomination for lieutenant governor in 2018.

A U.S. Navy veteran and animal lover who currently does medical logistics at a Skokie hospital, Williams' favorite book, according to the Facebook, is the U.S. Constitution.

**Windy City Times: What words would you use to describe the 48th ward?**

David Earl Williams III: I would say its diverse, independent, welcoming, family-friendly, vibrant, and tolerant.

**WCT: You've said, "Honor may not exist in Chicago politics, but I'm bringing it back!" Is that part of your decision to run and, if not, what made you decide to run?**

DW: It's kind of about what I'm trying to bring, changing the culture of Chicago politics. It's just been run too long by Chicago machine type of politicians, where it's just been corruption scandal after corruption scandal. It would be nice to have people who put the community first, [instead of] trying to fill their own pockets. I'm running because of the fact I have a desire to serve the community like I did in the Navy. [But], I do believe in terms limits. I don't believe anyone, regardless if you like them or if they're the worst person in office, should be in there more than two terms.

**WCT: What do you think differentiates you from the incumbent?**

DW: I will tell you one thing, if I get elected, I'm going to give 30% of my salary to a charity in the ward. I even did mention in the Windy City Times questionnaire it going towards services like Test Positive Aware Network ( TPAN ) for the HIV testing and everything else they do. Look, I'm more energetic, I'm not in this for the money, I don't have a family name per se that's involved in politics where I can just win it. I'm a community activist and I like working with people. And that's going to be my drive, just to try to work with everybody regardless of who they are, not just to work with the more affluent part of the ward and ignore the rest of the ward.

**WCT: You mentioned term limits which was a part of the People First Pledge that you signed along with other candidates.**

DW: I was intrigued about the fact that it called for things like running for one elected office at a time instead of having a bunch of offices that you're running for. The term limit thing obviously caught my eye, and banning employees from having outside employment. As alderman, if I'm to win, that's going to be my full-time duty. I want to be there for the people. I don't want to have anything outside of it that could influence my decision. I'm not going to be there pandering

to special interests.

**WCT: Tell us your thoughts on the Civilian Police Accountability Council ( CPAC ).**

DW: What they want, and I agree, is to have an all-elected board. We have 25 CAPS districts, and the community members elected to those positions [are] going to set department policy and be able to hire and fire the superintendent. Some people [might] see this as being radical but I think we've left the decisions to City Hall for far too long; cases of police brutality have not been addressed properly. Usually it's just been that they were going to pay these people off when they lost a family member, like people are going to forget about this, like life just goes on. But it keeps happening. I was in the Navy and anytime you did something wrong, depending on the severity of it, you're going to be reprimanded in some way. I don't think public servants should be exempt from that.

**WCT: Public safety has been brought up of-**

**ten in talking about Chicago in general and the 48th ward. What would you recommend to have a better relationship between police and people of color in the transgender community specifically?**

DW: We do need cultural sensitivity training when it comes to the Chicago Police Department ( CPD ). If they're going to be in these areas, they have to be able to talk to these people. And I do feel that, if possible, cops should be able to work within their own communities instead of someone who lives far north, for example, going to the south side. That doesn't make sense, they're going to be out of their element.

**WCT: What are your thoughts on marriage equality?**

DW: I've always been for it. If you're happy, you're happy. No one has the right to tell you who you can and cannot be with, as long as it's between consenting adults.

**WCT: What are your thoughts on a school that would be designed specifically for LGBTQ students, similar to the Harvey Milk School in New York?**

DW: I would be for that. I did read a little bit about the Harvey Milk School and I'm fine with it.

**WCT: What are your thoughts on LGBTQ-inclusive education?**

DW: I'm okay with that, too. You learn Black

history, I mean, why not? This is just reality — we live in a world that's very diverse and people shouldn't be narrow-minded about other people who they think are "different."

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBTQ community in the new year in your ward?**

DW: I personally won't tolerate, if there is any small business — because the 48th [Ward] is mainly made up of small businesses — or any business in general in the ward, any form of discrimination against people within the LGBT community. Those businesses will be put on blast and they will not be welcome. I want to run a ward that is going to accept African Americans, Latinos and those from the LGBT community to come and set up shop.

**WCT: Overall, what are your top priorities for the ward?**

DW: The high property tax hurts everybody. I'm in favor of the LaSalle Street Tax, that's 0.1% tax on all trading and buying of the stocks, bonds and derivatives. Once implemented, this [could] bring in about \$10-20 billion [for the state] — that's a lot right there that could fund education. But if I can't get the LaSalle Street tax, I wouldn't be against progressive city income taxes.

**To learn more about David Earl Williams III, visit: [dewforpolitics.com](http://dewforpolitics.com) .**

David Earl Williams III.  
Photo courtesy of campaign team



## ELECTIONS 2019: 49TH WARD

# Joe Moore talks LGBT issues, ethics reforms

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Joe Moore has been the 49th Ward alderman since 1991. His ward is among the most economically, culturally and racially diverse in the city.

Prior to that, Moore worked at the City of Chicago's Department of Law as an attorney during Mayor Harold Washington's tenure. Moore has lived in the ward his entire adult life and served on many community boards over the years.

He is running against challenger Maria Hadden.

**Windy City Times: Why should people vote for you again for an eighth term and not your challenger?**

Joe Moore: I have shown the ability to move the progressive ball forward. I have a worthy opponent who has campaigned hard, but I believe I bring more to the table due to my record and experience. With a new mayor, it is important to have in the city council experienced incumbents with progressive values.

**WCT: What are the most pressing issues for the 49th ward and how would you address them?**

JM: Public safety, affordable housing and good schools.

I have secured a commitment from the mayor to give the 24th precinct police district, which includes the 49th ward, a strategic deployment center, which will bring to Rogers Park the kind of smart policing strategies that resulted in significant reductions in violent crime in other areas of the city.

I will also build on my successful efforts to preserve and increase affordable housing opportunities in Rogers Park. I plan to convene a community task force to examine the feasibility of establishing a TIF district on Clark and Howard streets, to fund the creation of more affordable housing, promote locally-owned businesses, help schools and improve our infrastructure.

**WCT: In what ways have you advanced LGBT equality during your time as alderman?**

JM: I have been a strong and consistent supporter of human rights and equality throughout my career. Early on, I convinced some of my recalcitrant colleagues, who were progressives on other issues, to support expanding the human rights ordinance to protect people regardless of sexual orientation. Since then, I have supported every LGBT-focused ordinance including increasing HIV funding, expanding protections for trans people and marriage equality among others.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

JM: To be an equal and welcomed part of the community. Over 20 percent of the ward residents identify as LGBT and they are an integral part of our neighborhood. Like every other constituency I represent, I want them to have safe streets, good schools, vibrant commercial corridors and job opportunities.

**WCT: HIV prevention and awareness are still**

**important issues for the community. What have you done since becoming alderman regarding this issue? How will you use your role going forward to address the issue?**

JM: I joined with my then-colleague Helen Shiller to get more funding allocated for HIV prevention awareness campaigns and I continue to be an advocate for making that happen.

**WCT: Do you have any openly-LGBT people working on your staff? Campaign?**

JM: Not on my city staff, but I do have a campaign staffer who identifies as bisexual, as well as a number of campaign volunteers who identify as LGBT.

**WCT: Do you back an elected school board?**

JM: No. The key to educational success is accountability and a single elected mayor is more accountable than a board with multiple members. We should keep in mind that elected school boards have banned books and required the teaching of creationism.

**WCT: What are your recommendations for better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?**

JM: I was the first champion for community policing before anyone else was talking about it. I also was a lead sponsor of the ordinance that gave reparations to the victims of police torture.

Community policing provides opportunities for police officers and community members to get to know each other as human beings and work together. We need better training that includes cultural awareness and sensitivity to the LGBT community and people of color.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

JM: Fifteen dollars an hour.

**WCT: How should Chicago increase its revenue stream?**

JM: We need support from our partners at the state level to remove the barriers that prevent Chicago from raising revenue. Legalizing recreational marijuana and allowing Chicago to own a land-based casino offer two potential revenue streams. Also, the state should expand the sales tax base to include more services and give Chicago the right to enact a progressive income tax.

**WCT: Please elaborate on the campaign donations you have received from Ald. Ed Burke over the years. How do you reconcile that with your current and past calls for ethics reform?**

JM: Alderman Burke has contributed a grand total of \$2,750 in the last 18 years, which averages to around \$150 a year. He also donated to 35 of my colleagues, including most members of the Progressive Reform Caucus. The contributions I received were unsolicited and fully disclosed.

**WCT: Are you currently backing anyone for mayor?**

JM: No

See <https://electjoemoore.com/>.



Ald. Joe Moore.  
Photo from campaign team

## ELECTIONS 2019: 49TH WARD

# Lesbian candidate Maria Hadden on police, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

When Maria Hadden moved to Chicago from Ohio she quickly got involved in political activism, registering voters for the 2004 election. From 2007-2010, Hadden and fellow condo building neighbors organized to stay in their homes after the housing bubble burst. Along with her decade of community activism, Hadden has helped build two national non-profits which give communities and governments tools to make democracy more equitable and inclusive.

She is running against incumbent Joe Moore for the 49th Ward aldermanic seat.

**Windy City Times: Your campaign site has “community choice, community voice” as your message. What does that mean?**

Maria Hadden: We are building this grassroots campaign with over 300 volunteers who are committed to making me the next alderman. This ward has a tradition of independent, progressive voices and I want to be able to continue that. In office that means making decisions centered around the people that live here.

**WCT: What are the most pressing issues for the 49th Ward and how would you address them?**

MH: Affordable and accessible housing, assisting neighborhood public schools and promoting our vibrant small business community which provides a path for many immigrants economic security

My focus will be on creating a plan for development without displacement.

The current alderman has promoted charter schools, despite funding challenges in our public school system and against community will. There needs to be more equitable funding for the public schools, not an expansion of charters in our ward. About 62 percent of ward residents feel the same way as I do.

During the campaign, I have had town hall meetings and coffees in people's homes to talk about these issues and that will continue when I am elected.

**WCT: You're an openly lesbian candidate. Why do you think it is important to have more LGBT voices on the city council?**

MH: Having more marginalized voices in any decision-making body is vital because more perspectives lead to better decisions and representation matters. We need to set examples for future generations that being public and open about one's identity is something we deserve.

**WCT: Are any of your campaign staffers openly LGBT?**

MH: Yes. My staff has representation from every marginalized group, not just LGBT people.

**WCT: What is your vision for the LGBT community?**

MH: Focusing on the challenges that our LGBT youth population still face, including making them feel safe everywhere in the city.

The health and wellness of all Chicago residents should be of paramount importance in legislation, planning and ensuring that this city is still here in the next 100 years.

**WCT: HIV prevention and awareness are still important issues for the community. How would you address this if you are elected?**

MH: Our ward has one of the highest concentration of people living with HIV and AIDS and we need to bring more visibility that is empowering and holistic around public health awareness and access to care.

**WCT: What are your recommendations for better relationships between the police and citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community?**

MH: The consent decree is a good first step. A culture change within police leadership and other city officials is key. That means a line has to be drawn on what is acceptable behavior. There needs to be mandatory anti-bias and sensitivity training and real accountability when police violate people's rights. I am hopeful that we are moving in that direction but it will be contingent on who hold leadership positions in our city and what our new Illinois Attorney General plans to do.

I will work on re-establishing relationships between ward residents and the police who patrol our neighborhoods so they trust each other. The code of silence between officers has to end.

**WCT: Do you back an elected school board?**

MH: Yes.

**WCT: What is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?**

MH: Fifteen dollars per hour and, over time, it should be adjusted for inflation and the rising cost of living.

**WCT: How should Chicago increase its revenue stream?**

MH: We need a progressive income tax, LaSalle Street Tax and to legalize and tax marijuana. Prioritizing paying our bills first and that includes our pension obligations and increasing accountability to prevent legal fees and settlement payments due to police misconduct will help the city's bottom line. We also should stop giving away public dollars to corporations and other entities.

**WCT: Are you currently backing anyone for mayor?**

MH: No.

**WCT: Why should people vote for you instead of the incumbent or other challengers?**

MH: I am asking for my community's vote so I can be a public servant who is not only committed to taking care of the basic services in our



Maria Hadden.

Photo by Ryan Edmund Photography

ward, but also working in our city council to address some of the big problems we face at the city level around housing, public schools and community safety. I will be an independent progressive representative who will prioritize the needs of 49th Ward residents over those of outside inter-

ests or the mayor, because I believe that our city can and should do better. To do better, we need elected officials like myself who will commit to making that happen by centering people in the decision-making process.

See <https://www.mariafor49.org/>.

## ELECTIONS 2019: 50TH WARD

# Rowlas competes for 50th Ward city council seat

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Openly gay retired educator Andrew Rowlas is running in the Feb. 26 citywide elections to replace longtime Ald. Debra Silverstein in representing the 50th Ward on the city's far north side.

**Windy City Times: Why did you decide to run?**

Andrew Rowlas: We've got to do better than the current alderwoman. She has voted, according to Take Back Chicago, in her first term, 98 percent with the mayor. She's not thinking with independence for the ward. We're supposed to have a strong city council, and we have lost, in the last 34 years, because of the power structure, a deliberative democracy in our city.

The city council just rubber-stamps whatever the mayor says he wants, and that's not the way we're supposed to be. We're supposed to discuss issues and say, "This is good for the city" or, "This is not good for the city." It's broken and it needs to be reformed.

**WCT: What in your background makes you think you're someone who can help do that?**

AR: I was a public school educator for 38 years, so I was always kind of involved in issues. I see myself as a progressive, both as a candidate, and, philosophically speaking, in politics. I try to keep up with what's being done, and think I know what can be done better. As an educator, we were constantly under attack for supposedly not doing a good job, so we had to constantly evaluate our curricula, our goals, things like that. The schools I worked at, when getting ready for accreditation every seven years, had to do a self-examination, and say, "Here's what we've done, here's what we could have done better, and here's what we need to do." I think that process is something that needs to be done in government.

**WCT: You pledged "full-transparency in 50th Ward decision making"—which many politicians promise. What does that look like to you, and how would you ensure that it's ongoing should you be elected?**

AR: One thing that's important is to have regular community meetings. We're not a politically active ward in many ways. I think it's important to get people involved. Another thing is that we need to have a planning and economic development board. I went around to the various corridors and we've lost about 100 storefronts. One of the best places, on Lunt and Western, [BBQ Supply] closed. There are three empty store fronts and a convenience store nearby that closed—four empty storefronts. People I knew would walk over there. Now, they're going to get in their car and go to Niles or Skokie, or wherever. We've lost

a lot of opportunity.

**WCT: Who would you want to be part of that board?**

AR: I would definitely want to get as many groups to the table. I'm all for participatory budgeting, so the process there is to get as many organizations, religious groups and people involved as you can. Piggy-backing on that idea, I'd definitely want to get some realtors and developers on it, as well as a cross-section of the local population. That includes high school kids. Young people have so many good ideas. I would also like for there to be seniors represented, and people between those ages.

**WCT: What do you think is a reasonable minimum wage for the city?**

AR: At least \$15 now, not waiting a minimum of six years to implement it.

**WCT: What are the most pertinent issues for LGBT residents of the ward?**

AR: I'm surprised at how many there are, when I go around from door-to-door. I think that people feel safe here, but I don't know how comfortable feel being out. I think trying to be involved in the decision-making in the community events might help. When everyone talks about "diversity," they're speaking about religious and ethnic diversity. Maybe we need to emphasize the LGBTQ diversity we have as well. That community is not just restricted to white people either.

**WCT: have you done any kind of advocacy or activism work on behalf of the LGBT community?**

AR: I retired 10 years ago, and didn't stay too involved. But when I was teaching, I was involved with GLSEN. I never took a leadership position. For a while, I went to the gay and lesbian Democratic group, but they folded.

**WCT: Why is it important for members of the LGBT community to hold elected office?**

AR: We offer a lot of insight. We offer another perspective. I think that we, as a whole, have a broader view of society. Often people from our community have been discriminated against and threatened, and as a result we often see things from a viewpoint that is helpful to identify with other minority groups.

**WCT: What are your thoughts on how the City Council has erupted into controversy the past few weeks?**

AR: I don't think my alderman is corrupt, but she has been quiet. She has gone along with things and she has gone along with the majority. I think her silence has contributed to this. She's got to know what's going on and know what the power structure is.

See [rowlasforward50.com](http://rowlasforward50.com).

Andrew Rowlas.  
Photo courtesy of subject



## ELECTIONS 2018

# Guide to the LGBTs

This year's mayoral/aldermanic elections featured a record number of openly LGBT candidates throughout Illinois. From those races, several of those individuals are vying for various political offices later this month:



**Colin Bird-Martinez.**  
Photo courtesy of subject

## —Colin Bird-Martinez

Race: Alderman (31st Ward)  
Website: [ColinForChicago.com](http://ColinForChicago.com)

The skinny: Bird-Martinez lives in Hermosa with husband Joshua; their two cats, Roy and Max; and a dachshund, Frankie. He also co-founded Hermosa Neighborhood Association to bring about positive change in the community.



**James Cappleman.**  
Photo by Kate Sosin

## —James Cappleman

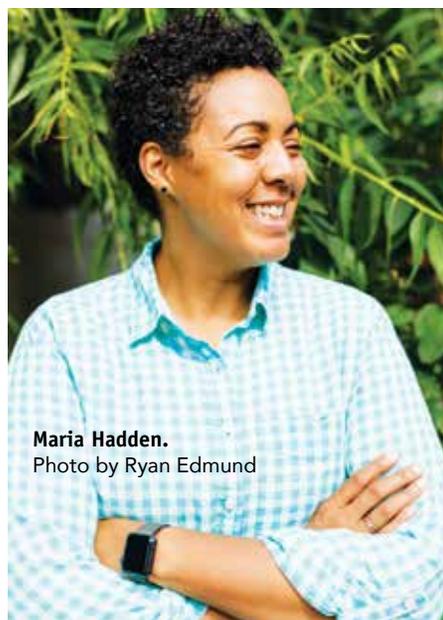
Race: Alderman (46th Ward)  
Website: <https://www.citizensforcappleman.com/>

The skinny: A former teacher, social worker, and health care non-profit leader, Cappleman has represented the ward since 2011. This year, he faces five candidates.

## —Maria Hadden

Race: Alderman (49th Ward)  
Website: <https://www.mariafor49.org/>

The skinny: Running against longtime incumbent Ald. Joe Moore, Hadden is the executive director of Our City Our Voice—a national nonprofit organization she founded to enable communities and government across the country to re-design democracy for more empowered and equitable participation.



**Maria Hadden.**  
Photo by Ryan Edmund

## —Lori Lightfoot

Race: Mayor  
Website: <https://lightfootforchicago.com/>

The skinny: Lightfoot has served as senior equity partner in the Litigation and Conflict Resolution Group at Mayer Brown LLP as well as chair of the Police Accountability Task Force. She has secured several endorsements, including support from the Chicago Sun-Times and the Equality Illinois PAC.



**Lori Lightfoot.**  
Photo courtesy of campaign team

## —Raymond Lopez

Race: Alderman (15th Ward)  
Website: <http://www.the15thward.org/>

The skinny: Lopez is also facing multiple candidates (four). He was elected as Chicago's 15th Ward alderman on April 7, 2015.



**Raymond Lopez.**  
Photo by Matt Simonette

## Angela "Angie" Maloney.

Photo courtesy of subject



## —Angela "Angie" Maloney

Race: Alderman (47th Ward)  
Website: <http://iam47.org/>

The skinny: Maloney is one of the most competitive races in the city, with nine people running to succeed incumbent Ald. Ameya Pawar, who is running for city treasurer.

## —Deb Mell

Race: Alderman (33rd Ward)  
Website: <https://www.debfor33.com/>

The skinny: Mell, a member of the City Council's LGBT Caucus along with four others, is a former Illinois state representative. She was a member of Equal Marriage Now in the mid-2000s and participated in protest actions that led to her arrest in front of the Cook County headquarters. Mell's arrest made the news due to her father's and brother-in-law's (former Ald. Dick Mell and ex-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, respectively) political positions at the time.



**Deb Mell.**  
Photo courtesy of campaign team



**David Mihalyfy.**  
Photo courtesy of subject

## —David Mihalyfy

Race: Alderman (11th Ward)  
Website: <http://www.letourlightshine11thward.com/>

The skinny: Mihalyfy is a labor and education activist who's competing against incumbent Patrick Daley Thompson, the grandson of former Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley and a nephew of ex-Mayor Richard M. Daley.



**Marilyn Morales.**  
Photo courtesy of subject

## —Marilyn Morales

Race: Alderman (45th Ward)  
Website: <http://www.maggie2019.com/>

The skinny: Morales brings more than 25 years of dedicated local government experience working for the Chicago Park District and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

## —Maggie O'Keefe

Race: Alderman (40th Ward)  
Website: Maggie2019.com

The skinny: O'Keefe worked on multiple campaigns in the previous election cycle, including Ameya Pawar for governor, Fritz Kaegi for Cook County assessor, and three winning races for judge.



**Maggie O'Keefe.**  
Photo courtesy of Cady Mattson

## —Carlos Ramirez-Rosa

Race: Alderman (35th Ward)  
Website: CarlosRosa.org

The skinny: Ramirez-Rosa, like Lopez, was elected in 2015. The ward encompasses the neighborhoods of Albany Park, Avondale, Hermosa, Irving Park and Logan Square.



**Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.**  
Photo by Matt Simonette

## Andrew Rowlas.

Photo courtesy of subject



## —Andrew Rowlas

Race: Alderman (50th Ward)  
Website: <https://www.rowlasforward50.com/>

The skinny: Backed by mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot, Rowlas has said that, if he wins, he would focus on creating a zoning advisory council and holding monthly ward meetings.



**Tom Tunney.**  
Photo by Matt Simonette

## —Tom Tunney

Race: Alderman (44th Ward)  
Website: TomTunney.com

The skinny: Tunney, the Ann Sather restaurant owner who has been alderman of the ward for more than 15 years, is locked in a battle this year with another gay Democrat (Austin Baidas) and one-time Cook County Republican Party Executive Director Elizabeth Shydrowski.



**Annise Parker.**  
Photo by Matt Simonette

## ELECTIONS 2019

## Annise Parker talks Victory Fund record, Chicago election

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For Annise Parker—who was formerly the mayor of Houston and was the first openly lesbian person to be the mayor of any major American city—the 2018 midterm elections were not just a “blue wave.” She called them a “rainbow wave” as well.

“There were more than 750 LGBT candidates across the country that we could identify,” said Parker, who’s now president and CEO of Victory Fund and Victory Institute, national nonpartisan organizations that give financial support and trainings respectively to openly LGBT persons running for office. “Through the course of the year, we endorsed 272 ... Our endorsed candidates had a 76-percent success rate, so we’re excited about that.”

Victory Fund may be nonpartisan, but their supported candidates are usually Democrats, Parker noted. “We work up and down the ballot, and we’re the only organization that supports LGBT candidates exclusively, not allies. We’re also the only organization that does every level of office, so school board, city council, mayor, state reps, Congress. But our wheelhouse is statewide races. We did really well in those this year.”

There are only four states left in the union that have never had openly LGBT legislators: Alaska, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee. Parker said that the “critical mass” in defeating or even heading-off anti-LGBT legislation often comes when a state elects three openly LGBT legislators.

“That’s when see a lot of stuff get stopped,” she explained. “It’s a lot harder to look at a colleague that you’ll need a vote from someplace down the line and tell them that you don’t think they’re equal.”

Parker added that the Fund does not have a lit-

mus test for whom it endorses but that prospects have to be LGBT, be willing to advocate based on their sought office, and be pro-choice.

“Then it’s a matter of, are you a credible candidate, and could you put a campaign together?” she said.

Among those area candidates in the past election who received Victory Fund endorsements were state Rep. Lamont Robinson (D-Chicago) and Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison.

“A lot of folks thought that Kevin Morrison wasn’t going to win, but we looked at his track record as an organizer,” Parker explained. “He was raising money and doing good grassroots work—and there he is [in office] now.”

Victory Fund won’t release endorsements for the 2020 election until this December, in the meantime, the organization will be focusing on myriad 2019 races, among them the upcoming Chicago citywide elections, as well as candidate trainings.

Those receiving aldermanic endorsements include incumbent Aids. Raymond Lopez (15th Ward), Deb Mell (33rd), Tom Tunney (44th) and James Cappleman (46th), as well as Maria Hadden, who is challenging 49th Ward incumbent Joe Moore. The fund also endorsed mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot.

“Her path to victory was narrow, but in the analysis of Lori, she’s a strong candidate and clearly meets our baseline criteria,” Parker explained. “She raised a lot of money when she stood up and was strong enough to go up against Rahm Emanuel and say, ‘I’m a reform candidate and I want to clean up Chicago politics.’ When he dropped out of the race, her star ascended for us. ... But polling in that race is probably worthless at this point, with so many candidates.”

# Elections 2019

**WCT** - Windy City Times emailed questionnaires to every registered citywide and aldermanic candidate with whom we were able to make contact by email or phone; for others, we mailed paper copies to their address on file with the board of elections.

The questions were about a wide range of issues, LGBT, HIV/AIDS, minimum wage, crime, youth experiencing homelessness, and more. Some questions did not have a yes/or no or "correct" answer, but involved more nuance and detailed narrative answers. Therefore, we rate candidates on an A-F scale, not by numbers. Readers will note not very many are below a "C" because those candidates likely did not even bother to respond to a survey from an LGBT newspaper.

We will be posting all surveys, as turned in by candidates, on our website. Look for a link under the Politics button at the top of our website, or search for the headline "2019 Election Survey Responses."

Windy City Times does not endorse in any elections, but we hope our survey educates readers who are making tough choices for citywide and aldermanic races Tuesday, Feb. 26. Please regularly check windycitytimes.com for updates, coverage and interviews in the days leading up to the election.

**IVI** - Independent Voters of Illinois Independent Precinct Organization

**GIA** - Grassroots Illinois Action

**IC** - Indivisible Chicago

**SEIU** - Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois

**CTU** - Chicago Teachers' Union

**EIP** - Equality IL PAC

**LPAC** - Lesbian PAC

**VF** - Victory Fund

WCT IVI IC SEIU CTU EIP LPAC VF

## CHICAGO MAYOR

Jerry Joyce							
Paul Vallas	A						
Willie L. Wilson							
Toni Preckwinkle	A		Y	Y			
William M. Daley	B+						
Garry McCarthy							
Gery Chico	A-						
Susana A. Mendoza	A						
Amara Enyia							
La Shawn K. Ford	A-						
Neal Sáles-Griffin							
Lori Lightfoot	A	Y			Y	Y	Y
Robert "Bob" Fioretti							
John Kenneth Kozlar							

## CHICAGO CITY CLERK

Anna M. Valencia			Y				
Patricia Horton							
Elizabeth "Betty" Arias-Ibarra							

## CHICAGO CITY TREASURER

Melissa Conyears-Ervin				Y			
Ameya Pawar	A-						
Peter Garipey		Y					

WCT IVI GIA SEIU CTU EIP VF

## CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL

### ALDERMAN - 1st WARD

Proco "Joe" Moreno (incumbent)				Y			
Daniel La Spata		B+	Y				

### ALDERMAN - 2nd WARD

Brian Hopkins (incumbent)		B+					
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### ALDERMAN - 3rd WARD

Pat Dowell (incumbent)	B	Y		Y			
Alexandria Willis	B						

### ALDERMAN - 4th WARD

Sophia King	B-	Y		Y	Y		
Ebony D. Lucas							

### ALDERMAN - 5th WARD

Leslie A. Hairston (incumbent)		Y		Y	Y		
William Calloway							
Gabriel Piemonte							

### ALDERMAN - 6th WARD

Roderick T. Sawyer (incumbent)		Y		Y	Y		
Richard A. Wooten							
Deborah A. Foster-Bonner							

### ALDERMAN - 7th WARD

Gregory L. Mitchell (incumbent)				Y			
Charles Kyle							
Jedediah L. Brown		Y					

### ALDERMAN - 8th WARD

Michelle A. Harris (incumbent)				Y			
Jewel R. Easterling-Smith							
Linda Hudson							
Faheem Shabazz							

### ALDERMAN - 9th WARD

Anthony A. Beale (incumbent)	B-						
Cleopatra Watson		Y					
Paul Collins							
Essie Hall							

### ALDERMAN - 10th WARD

Susan Sadlowski-Garza (incumbent)				Y	Y		
Robert "Bobby" Loncar							

### ALDERMAN - 11th WARD

Patrick Daley Thompson (incumbent)				Y			
David Mihalyfy							

### ALDERMAN - 12th WARD

George Cardenas (incumbent)				Y			
Pete Demay							
Martha Yerania Rangel							
Jose Rico		Y					

### ALDERMAN - 13th WARD

Marty Quinn (incumbent)				Y	Y		
David J. Krupa							

### ALDERMAN - 14th WARD

Edward M. Burke (incumbent)				Y	Y		
Jamie Guzman							
Tanya G. Patino		Y	Y				

### ALDERMAN - 15th WARD

Joseph G. Williams							
Rafael "Rafa" Yanez	B+	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Raymond A. Lopez (incumbent)							
Berto Aguayo		Y					
Otis Davis, Jr.							

### ALDERMAN - 16th WARD

Stephanie Coleman (incumbent)	B+						
Latasha M. Sanders							
Kenny C. Doss II							
Toni L. Foulkes (incumbent)				Y	Y		
Jeffrey L. Lewis							
Eddie Johnson III							

### ALDERMAN - 17th WARD

David H. Moore (incumbent)	B	Y		Y	Y		
Raynetta Greenleaf	B-						

WCT IVI GIA SEIU CTU EIP VF

### ALDERMAN - 18th WARD

Chuks Onyezia		Y					
Derrick G. Curtis (incumbent)				Y			

### ALDERMAN - 19th WARD

Matthew J. O'Shea (incumbent)					Y		
David A. Dewar							

### ALDERMAN - 20th WARD

Jeanette B. Taylor				Y	Y	Y	
Nicole J. Johnson	B	Y					
Maya Hodari							
Jennifer O. Maddox							
Andre Smith							
Dernard D. Newell							
Quandra V. Speights							
Kevin M. Bailey							
Anthony Driver, Jr.	B-						

### ALDERMAN - 21st WARD

Howard B. Brookins, Jr. (incumbent)					Y		
Marvin McNeil							
Patricia A. Foster							
Joseph C. Ziegler, Jr.							

### ALDERMAN - 22nd WARD

Michael D. Rodriguez		Y	Y	Y	Y		
Lisette "Liz" Lopez	B						
Richard Juarez							
Neftalie Gonzalez							

### ALDERMAN - 23rd WARD

Silvana Tabares (incumbent)					Y		
Paulino R. Villarreal, Jr.							

### ALDERMAN - 24th WARD

Creative Scott						Y	
Michael Scott, Jr. (incumbent)							
Toriano A. Sanzone							
Traci "Treasure" Johnson		Y					

### ALDERMAN - 25th WARD

Hilario Dominguez	B+						
Alexander "Alex" Acevedo	B+						
Troy Antonio Hernandez	B						
Byron Sigcho-Lopez	B+	Y				Y	
Aida Flores							

### ALDERMAN - 26th WARD

Theresa Shaw							
Roberto Maldonado (incumbent)	B	Y		Y			
David Herrera							

### ALDERMAN - 27th WARD

Walter Burnett, Jr. (incumbent)	C+	Y					
Cynthia D. Bednarz	B						

### ALDERMAN - 28th WARD

Miguel Bautista		Y				Y	
Jason C. Ervin (incumbent)							
Jasmine Jackson							
Beverly Miles							

### ALDERMAN - 29th WARD

Dwayne Truss							
Chris Taliaferro (incumbent)		Y		Y	Y		
Zerlina A. Smith							

### ALDERMAN - 30th WARD

Jessica W. Gutierrez						Y	
Ariel E. Reboyras (incumbent)							
Edgar "Edek" Esparza							

### ALDERMAN - 31st WARD

Colin Bird-Martinez		A					Y
Milagros "Milly" Santiago (incumbent)	B+	Y		Y			
Felix Cardona Jr.							

