

WINDY CITY TIMES CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Aldermanic races

Return responses by fax (773-871-7609), regular mail (Windy City Times, c/o Andrew Davis, 5315 N. Clark, #192, Chicago, Ill., 60640) or e-mail (Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com). Feel free to call 773-871-7610, ext. 201, if questions arise.

DEADLINE: Friday, Jan. 9, 2015, by 5 p.m. LATE RESPONSES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Please feel free to use additional paper as needed.

YOUR NAME: [James Cappleman](#) INCUMBENT? [YES](#)
OFFICE SOUGHT: [Alderman](#) WARD (if appropriate): [46](#)

- 1) Do you have or would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination? [Half of my staff are LGBT and I am an openly gay alderman. We have a written policy that protects sexual orientation and gender identity.](#)
- 2) Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT-related issues? [Given that half of the office staff and I are members of the LGBT community, we've done sensitivity training out in the community regarding LGBT-related issues.](#)
- 3) Have you taken or would you take any steps to further HIV/AIDS treatment and education programs? If so, what are those measures? [I've asked the Dept. of Public Health to improve their outcome measures for social services receiving CDBG funding to show documentation that highlights the number of people who test positive who are also willing to receive medical care. It's not enough to test for HIV; we need to take steps to make sure there's adequate treatment that's also provided. I've known David Munar from Howard Brown for over 20 years when we were both working in the HIV/AIDS field. He knows me to be a strong advocate for those living with HIV/AIDS.](#)
- 4) What is your position on abortion as it pertains to the law?
[I strongly support a woman's right to choose.](#)
- 5) What is your position regarding funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education?
[I've always strongly supported funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and education. Due to fewer available dollars, I also want to ensure that we are creating good outcome measures so that we can be assured that we're maximizing our limited dollars as I advocate for more funding.](#)
- 6) Do you favor marriage equality (marriage between two people of the same gender)?

When I ran for 46th Ward Alderman in 2010-11, I had 2 of my campaign staff take time off from the campaign to work on marriage equality. I am the only alderman in City Council who is in a same-sex marriage.

7) Do you favor hate-crimes legislation that increases penalties for crimes committed based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person attacked?

Absolutely yes.

8) Do you believe that LGBT individuals should become foster parents if they are qualified?

Absolutely yes.

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

Absolutely yes.

10) Would you keep committees around such as the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues? Absolutely yes. I've made my position on this very clear in the past.

11) What are your thoughts on a school that would be designed specifically for LGBT students, much like the Harvey Milk School in New York City?

Adolescence is tough, and it's especially tough for adolescents who are LGBTQ. I believe some LGBTQ students need this type of safe space so that they can be better prepared adults later on.

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

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

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

Absolutely yes.

15) What would you recommend to have a better relationship between police and the citizens they serve, including people of color and the transgender community? We need to create more opportunities for the police to interact with people of color (especially youth) and the transgender community. I'd like to see some type of incentive program for police to become more involved with mentoring or advocating for these 2 populations.

16) If you are an incumbent, did you vote for the recent increase in the city's minimum wage and, if a challenger, would you have? Also, what do you think is the ideal minimum wage for the city of Chicago?

I voted for the \$13 minimum wage and also have signed on as a sponsor for the \$15 minimum wage ordinance.

17) How do you propose to handle the crime rate in Chicago, especially in minority neighborhoods? There are multiple factors for the causes of crime, as well as multiple solutions, that when done together, will make stronger dents on crime. As alderman, I focused on 2 criminal hot spots by bringing in the police, the Cook County's State's Attorney's Office, local businesses, landlords, and residents to work together. Businesses were taught how to be more proactive with addressing crime in and around their businesses. We taught them how to call 911 and tracked their calls. Security was beefed up and more cameras were placed in strategic places. Crime at Lawrence/Sheridan dropped over 80% in 8 months. Crime at Broadway/Wilson dropped 39% in 8 months. I also started a building managers group that learned best practices when it comes to creating better security and management of their buildings. I also had the youth social services in the area and the schools meet to discuss ways we can help the youth stay more involved in the programming that's available to them. Resources were shared to help the youth receive more educational and employment opportunities. Each summer, I walk in areas of high gang activity and reach out to them to hear about their concerns. I used that time to help connect many of them to educational and employment opportunities. I also believe more work is needed to improve the relationship of the police with the youth, and have worked with the police to provide more toy drives and youth gatherings in some of the high-rises to help break down the barriers. In Uptown, we also have a high number of people living with addictions on the streets, some of them with hundreds and hundreds of arrests. I got City funding to have Haymarket work with the police to have them work together to address this need. Not only does this help stop the endless and useless cycle of arrests, but it allows more police on the streets (who are not processing these arrests) to turn their attention to more serious crimes.

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

There are parts of the ward with especially high rates of poverty, with many older youth feeling hopeless about good employment opportunities. As a licensed clinical social worker, I believe it's best to tackle this issue from a systems perspective, rather than a bandaid on the issue. More work is needed to keep kids motivated to stay in school with strong mentoring programs that will give them a "lift up" and build hope in their lives. Work is also needed to strengthen these families. When I spoke with many individuals who felt trapped in gangs, they opened up to me time and time again about the lack of support they experienced in their own families. It was their own gang members that gave them needed worth and recognition. We need to provide opportunities for youth to get more support to be successful adults in the future.

19) Some studies show that 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ. What would you do to provide more resources for prevention, education and services for the entire homeless youth population? I would first start with work to strengthen the families of LGBTQ youth and help parents with first accepting, and then affirming their child's

sexual orientation/gender identity. I want to see programs in place at the schools that allow a social worker to reach out to these families to assist them. For youth who are homeless, I have and continue to push for outcome measures that allow LGBTQ youth to stabilize their situation and assist them with needed employment and educational opportunities. I continue to strongly push for immediate housing with wrap-around services, especially housing for individuals with ongoing and active addictions.

20) New York City eliminated barriers to transgender people changing their birth certificates. They just need a letter from a doctor to do so. Would you support this for Chicago? *Absolutely yes.*

21) Are any members of your current staff—either campaign or general office personnel—openly LGBT? I am openly gay, my chief of staff is a married lesbian, and I also have another staff member who is an open lesbian and who is also married. I also have a campaign staff member who is openly gay.

22) Please list any and all experience you have on LGBT-related issues.
I am the past board president of Dignity/Chicago, which is a Roman Catholic organization that seeks progressive change within the Catholic Church to recognize the worth and dignity of the LGBTQ community and women. I've been active with this organization for over 25 years. My husband and I purposely chose a woman Catholic priest to perform our ceremony because she was both a friend and we strongly believe that women should be allowed to be ordained priests. In my early social work career, I provided services to men who were openly gay and living with HIV/AIDS. In 1995, I helped a co-worker write a pamphlet that educated medical staff about developing a stronger rapport with their transgender patients. In 2007, 2011, and now in 2015, I was endorsed by the Victory Fund in my bid for 46th Ward Alderman. Through the Victory Fund in 2012, I was awarded a Bohnett fellowship to attend the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. As the only elected official in Illinois in a same-sex marriage, I have served as a role model that I believe has broken down barriers with other elected officials.

23) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing the LGBT community today?
The next area that needs the most work is addressing the needs of the transgender community. We're still stuck on where transgender people can go to the bathroom while there's still so much work to do to address the many different forms of discrimination faced on so many different levels. Two areas that need special focus are youth and seniors who are transgender.