

# 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

## General

DATE: 1/5/2011

NAME: Gery Chico

HOME PHONE 847-212-1545 BUSINESS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: 333 W. Wacker, Chicago, IL 60606

CAMPAIGN PHONE 847-212-1545 FAX \_\_\_\_\_

CAMPAIGNWEBSITE [www.gerychico.com](http://www.gerychico.com) EMAIL [fields.leslie@gmail.com](mailto:fields.leslie@gmail.com)

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Ken Snyder

*1. Briefly list your involvement with LGBT issues and organizations over the last ten years.*

I have a long history of being a friend of the LGBT community. I have been committed to fighting on behalf of the community. As Chief of Staff to the Mayor, I extended the benefits for domestic partners and prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation. As President of the Chicago Board of Education, I instituted programs to prevent bullying in the schools. Additionally, while running for the U.S. Senate in 2004, I was the only candidate to support full marriage equality. One of my first steps in my campaign for Mayor was to release a comprehensive LGBT agenda.

## LGBT City of Chicago Employee Benefits

*1. Which additional benefits would you seek to extend to LGBT employees that are not currently being offered by the City?*

As Chief of Staff to the Mayor, I worked to extend benefits to domestic partners. As Mayor, I will work to ensure that LGBT city employees receive the same benefits as all city employees. I will also work to extend domestic partner benefits to all contractors doing work with the city. Also, I will ensure parity of employment in all city agencies by requiring that the city employment opportunities for the LGBT community reflect the community's proportion of the city's population.

*2. Would you actively advocate for ensuring that LGBT employees are afforded the same partnership benefits as those individuals who are able to marry? Please be specific.*

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

Absolutely. I was the first candidate to launch an LGBT platform, and it remains the most comprehensive. I have a long history of inclusion and support for the LGBT community. As President of the Chicago Board of Education during the 1990s, I successfully fought for and implemented the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation. I also successfully implemented full benefits for domestic partners. While many candidates talk about wanting to do the right thing, I have a track record of accomplishment and advocacy on behalf of the LGBT community. I am proud of the work we have done together.

### Education

1. *What are your criteria for hiring and evaluating the CEO of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)? What aspects of diversity are important to you for this role and how, if at all, would the CEO be evaluated for creating a system where all students feel safe and respected within the Chicago Public Schools' system?*

As Mayor of Chicago, I will maintain the present leadership structure of a Chief Executive Officer, who has broad expertise and experience in management, and a Chief Education Officer, who will be an outstanding educator, with extensive experience in the classroom and in education administration. Both officers will be expected to share my commitment to equality for all students, staff and families, including members of the LGBT community.

These two key officials will be regularly evaluated, in part, on their commitment to LGBT equality, as evidenced by the policies they create and implement, the programs they design and implement, and the efforts they make to promote employment of LGBT individuals in the schools and in the school system.

2. *Will you commit to the inclusion of LGBT families and students in CPS policy formation and in plans/programs/activities of CPS?*

Families are families. Our schools must serve every parent and child in our city. The inclusion of all communities in the CPS policy formation is integral to meet that goal. All families, including LGBT families and students, will be included in CPS policies and programs.

Special attention will be given to policy-making to ensure to include LGBT families and students, and to ensure that funding is available to turn intentions into action.

3. *How would you support system-wide inclusion of LGBT topics in curricula in age-appropriate ways? Would you support system-wide sex-education that includes HIV and STI prevention in age appropriate ways?*

I will support inclusion of LGBT topics on all sex education classes in the Chicago Public Schools, as well as including topics in other areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. I will require the CEO and Chief Education Officer to create and implement a policy to this effect.

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

Also, I support education of HIV and STI prevention in age-appropriate ways for students in our public schools. Our schools increasingly serve students who are children of same-sex relationships. I will ensure that all students are taught about the diversity that makes our city great.

I have always supported innovation in our schools and education delivery system. During my tenure as President of the Chicago Public School Board, we built dozens of new schools, and experimented with various models that had worked in other cities. I would be open to considering a school model designed specifically for LGBT youth, and the merits of such a plan. I remain firmly committed to ensuring that every Chicago school is safe, welcoming, and providing a quality education for all youth – regardless of identity or sexual orientation.

4. *Would you institute a CPS-wide online occurrence reporting system that includes reports of bullying and discrimination filed by students, staff and families that also tracks the category of protected class against which the incident was directed? If so, would you give students, staff and families an oversight role in tracking complaints and their resolutions in order to identify potential issues for schools, school leadership, school security, etc.?*

I support a system to track bullying and discrimination. I would also ensure that people who are victimized are treated with respect, and that their privacy rights are respected. I will create a central repository of information that gives administrators and advocates insight into trends and warning signs regarding bullying discrimination. Educators, parents, staff, and mental health professionals must have access to information that can enable early intervention and engagement of youth lacking adequate support structures.

5. *How will you fight to end anti-gay and other forms of bullying in schools (K-12)? Will you ensure that appropriate policies are written and implemented in schools to prevent or respond appropriately to bullying?*

Hate crimes and bullying do more than hurt the victim; they hurt an entire community, and the LGBT community knows all too well what that feels like. My LGBT policy platform includes a commitment to addressing hate crimes and bullying both in schools and in the community.

As Mayor of Chicago, I will make sure that the city prosecutes crimes motivated by hate to the fullest extent possible. I will also initiate a proactive anti-bullying program in all CPS schools, coordinated with relevant LGBT organizations and other social service agencies.

In addition to prosecution, we must focus on education and prevention. I will push for anti-bullying programs in all CPS schools, coordinated with relevant LGBT organizations and social service agencies. As President of the Board of Education and Chairman of the City Colleges, I implemented sensitivity training and anti-bullying initiatives. I will ensure that appropriate policies are implemented in schools to prevent and respond to bullying. I will also routinely update these policies to ensure that the most effective models are in place, and policies are still relevant.

# 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

## Aging

1. *Would you support an assessment of the capacity of the city of Chicago to provide culturally competent and welcoming programming for LGBT seniors?*

LGBT seniors face a myriad of issues related to their sexual orientation, including discrimination by staff and residents at senior centers, denial of housing in active retirement communities, and denial of the ability to be housed with a loved one in the same facility, among many others.

These issues are important to many in the LGBT community, and all members of the community are at risk of such civil rights violations. I will work to protect the rights of seniors, and LGBT seniors specifically. Specifically, I will direct all appropriate city departments to develop programs to address the problems facing LGBT seniors, including drafting appropriate city ordinances where applicable.

2. *How will you work with LGBT community agencies in Chicago to increase their capacity to service LGBT seniors?*

As Mayor, I will increase support and collaboration with the non-profit organizations that deliver services to the city's residents, often more efficiently and at a lower cost than city-provided services.

In order to leverage resources and ensure a robust network of social service delivery across Chicago, the city must foster better coordination among high-performing agencies, working with them to increase their capacity to serve LGBT seniors. Synchronizing these agencies will maximize resources and deliver focused, high-quality services to individuals in need. Further, accountability mechanisms must be in place to ensure our limited resources are being used in a manner that is providing efficient and effective service to as many individuals as possible.

3. *Will you recognize LGBT seniors as a vulnerable population with unique and specific needs and designated as a target population under the criteria of the Area Plan for the Chicago Department on Senior Services?*

Yes. Studies indicate that because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, many LGBT seniors have experienced discrimination. From refusal of admission to a facility to verbal or physical harassment, LGBT seniors suffer many forms of discrimination. There are inadequate protections against such harms. As Mayor, I will work to prevent such discrimination.

## Youth Homelessness

1. *What needs to be done to make Chicago a safer, more open community to LGBT youth to prevent homelessness?*

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

As Mayor, I will ensure that CPS focuses on providing support and services for at-risk and homeless students, including LGBT youth. Today, agencies providing services to these populations in Chicago are competing for limited resources due to budget shortfalls at the federal, state and local levels. Many of these agencies are forced to reduce services and, in many cases, are at risk of closing. Such actions threaten Chicago's overall safety net, which the homeless and at-risk populations depend on for critical support services, (e.g., shelter, food, financial assistance, employment training, housing counseling, etc).

2. *How will you work to improve LGBT competency in city departments and among organizations that receive city funds?*

It is important for all organizations in the city, whether they're private or public, to be fair and non-discriminatory in their actions. I understand the importance of equipping public employees with the training necessary to deliver services to all citizens.

As Mayor, I will work to implement mandatory LGBT sensitivity and diversity training for all members of the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Fire Department, Emergency Medical Treatment workers and other city employees working with members of Chicago's LGBT community.

### Transgender Rights

1. *Homelessness is a constant problem in the transgender community and is greatly linked to lack of employment opportunities for transgendered people. What will you do as mayor to address the problem of homelessness and employment among transgender individuals?*

As I noted above, agencies providing services to the homeless population in Chicago are competing for limited resources. Many of these agencies are forced to reduce services, and in many cases, are at risk of closing.

These agencies provide an array of vital services to the homeless population in Chicago. In order to leverage resources and ensure a robust network of social service delivery across Chicago, the city must encourage and facilitate better coordination among high-performing agencies. Synchronizing these agencies will maximize resources and deliver focused, high-quality services to individuals in need. Further, accountability mechanisms must be in place to ensure our limited resources are being used in a manner that is providing efficient and effective service to as many individuals as possible.

Ultimately, these difficult circumstances must be alleviated by better educating all Chicagoans to the essential equality of all individuals, and to our obligation to eliminate all discrimination. In the meantime, we must urge all agencies – and all employees, both public and private - to be sensitive to the particular problems of transgender individuals.

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

2. *How will you investigate and remedy the persistent instances of discrimination against transgender people that go unreported?*

I support full recognition of the civil rights of transgender people. As Mayor, I will work to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

I will commit to ending the 'no-snitch' culture that currently exists among many communities in the city, and I will advocate that the city prosecute discrimination cases against transgender people to the fullest extent possible.

3. *Can you commit to inclusion of more transgender people to work in municipal government, including managerial and directorial positions?*

I believe that our government is only good to the extent it reflects the diverse communities it serves. I will ensure parity across city agencies by requiring that employment ratios of LGBT employees be consistent with city population. I will also institute appointment initiatives to ensure that LGBT applicants to non-Shakman jobs are fairly and fully vetted.

### Marriage Equality

1. *Will you support equal marriage rights for same sex couples? Will you advocate for marriage equality on the state and federal level?*

Yes. In 2004, while running for the U.S. Senate, I supported full marriage equality and was the only candidate to do so. It was not popular then, but I stood up because I believed in it. If it is the right thing to do, I will do it. I do not compromise my values for what is politically expedient. I did not then, and I will not as Mayor.

A few weeks ago, leading up to the vote on Civil Unions, I called friends of mine who are legislators and encouraged them to vote for Civil Unions, and I am proud to have played a small part in the passage of that important bill. While we are all tremendously excited about Civil Unions, it is not the end of the road. As Mayor, I will keep fighting until we have full marriage equality under the law. This is the civil rights issue of our time, and I am proud to be a leader in the movement.

### HIV/AIDS & Health

1. *How will you acknowledge the urgent need for HIV prevention and continue to devote city resources toward programs and initiatives that counter the spread of HIV?*

One of the most important things that a leader can do is to stand up and be an advocate and an educator in the public forum. President Reagan's tragic delay in talking about AIDS and the

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

implication it was having for the straight as well as LGBT communities in America stymied critically needed funding for research and treatment.

As Mayor, I will talk actively about HIV/AIDS statistics and trends within the city of Chicago. I will ensure that we are laser-focused on this epidemic and the public will understand very clearly that, as Mayor, I am deeply concerned about and focused on this disease. I will also advocate for research and treatment funding at the city's public colleges, and the State of Illinois' public universities. With the number of pharmaceutical companies and leading research hospitals throughout Chicago, we need to be a leader in driving towards cures and innovative treatment options. I will be focused on that, and call together multi-disciplinary study groups with representatives from the LGBT community, the research community, those with HIV or AIDS, pharmaceutical companies, and government to ensure we are working together to advance prevention and treatment.

2. *Do you support continued City corporate funding for the Chicago Department of Public Health Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Health?*

The Chicago Department of Public Health Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Health needs our continued support and commitment to address community-specific health needs. Community health models have proven to be successful because they address health needs in a holistic way, and money spent on prevention and education is money later saved through more costly treatment and prescription drug programs. We also need close collaboration among other units of government and in particular the Cook County Health Department to ensure that prevention and education efforts are aligned across the county and region, and that patient-center care is administered in coordinated and culturally appropriate ways.

3. *How will you address HIV prevention in communities of color?*

HIV has disproportionately affected communities of color – and outreach, education, and treatment for these communities need additional attention. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) show a disproportionate impact on communities of color.

As Mayor, I will talk about the impact that this disease is having on Chicago, and all communities. We need to make resources available throughout the city, not just North Halsted, to ensure that we are addressing HIV/AIDS care and prevention in community-based ways. The city needs to work hand in hand with community health partners to ensure that health delivery models are having the greatest impact where those afflicted with this disease live. Money spent on smart prevention is ultimately money saved – the city must work to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and offer comprehensive and thoughtful treatment throughout the city.

4. *How will you work to improve LGBT competency in city health departments and among organizations that receive city funds?*

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

As President of the Chicago Public School Board during the 1990s, I successfully fought for and implemented the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation. I also successfully implemented full benefits to domestic partners.

I have pushed for education initiatives in the City Colleges that teach sensitivity training, ensure that people with HIV/AIDS are protected from discrimination, and provide full access to health care and treatment options for people who are HIV-positive and their partners. There is more that government can do, however, with respect to strengthening the relationship between the county (which runs the CORE Center, one of the nation's leading public sector health institutions for the treatment of HIV/AIDS) and the city's Department of Health. While a number of units of government have tangential responsibilities for HIV/AIDS treatment responsibilities, I will ensure that the City of Chicago is coordinating all of those services to make them available to citizens of Chicago.

We must strengthen the relationships with and funding for community partners like Howard Brown, TPAN, Center on Halsted, and numerous others throughout the city that deliver services and represent the core of the support infrastructure for people with HIV/AIDS in the city. I will be an active presence in those communities and those organizations.

As Mayor, I will also upgrade the LGBT liaison office to coordinate city services and funding, both public and private, with local LGBT organizations to build the best support network for the LGBT community in the nation. Finally, as Mayor I will lead bi-annual summits with neighborhood organizations and LGBT leaders to ensure that the city is addressing the developing needs and interests of the community.

5. *What criteria would you use to determine a more equitable way to distribute funding for HIV prevention and services?*

Funding for HIV prevention and services must be distributed equitably to ensure that those who need services have access to them. Resources should be distributed proportionately to the communities that are impacted, and perhaps disproportionately allocated to those communities where prevention can have the greatest impact.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has a blueprint for investment to enable technology and comparative effectiveness research – money that the city of Chicago should be pursuing. With the CORE center here in the Chicago-land area, and leading health and research institutions, Chicago makes a great target for prevention and service funding.

Recently, I announced my intention to bring to Chicago the American Center for Cures, a \$3 billion project that would be supported with federal funds. I will ensure that the American Center for Cures serves traditionally underserved communities, and has a special attention on equitable funding for prevention and services of HIV and other infectious diseases.

### Public Safety

## 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

1. *Will you promote the active recruitment of LGBT individuals for the Police and Fire Departments?*

Yes. As mentioned above, I have a long history of inclusion and protections as it relates to the LGBT community, and issues of gender identity. As Mayor, I will promote active recruitment of Police and Fire employees from the LGBT community, so that both departments reflect Chicago's diversity.

2. *How will you strengthen current LGBT sensitivity training programs in both Departments?*

I was the first candidate to launch an LGBT platform in this race, and it remains the most comprehensive. In that platform, I have committed to securing funding and implementing mandatory LGBT sensitivity and diversity training for all members of the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services personnel. I will also ensure that there is education and training with all other departments that interface with citizens. I implemented comparable measures with the Chicago Public Schools, and again have a demonstrated record of performance on this issue.

3. *Will you commit to placing an LGBT liaison in each police district? Or each of the 5 police areas?*

I support placement of an LGBT liaison in each police district. If we achieve my goal of a truly diverse and representative police force, then tapping individuals who work and reside within the various police districts to serve as LGBT liaisons will become a reality. As our city becomes increasingly diverse, so too must our police force and all city departments acknowledge and serve the LGBT community in specific and culturally competent ways. The first, easiest, and most transparent step is to designate liaisons that can be active voices within the Chicago Police Department. I will also ensure that regular meetings are convened with all of the liaisons, and that they serve not only as an advocacy body, but as a support network for LGBT individuals and issues within the Chicago Police Department.

4. *Would you support the creation and implementation of standardized guidelines for humane treatment of transgendered individuals while in the custody of the Chicago Police Department – guidelines that would be created by transgendered community members in collaboration with the Chicago Police Department?*

I fully support the creation and implementation of standardized guidelines for humane treatment of transgendered individuals while in the custody of the Chicago Police Department – and I will insist and ensure that those guidelines are created in collaboration with members of the transgendered community. As Mayor, I will also actively recruit transgendered individuals into the police force to serve as liaisons for developing guidelines such as how to treat detainees as well as other policies of interest to the transgender community.

# 2011 Mayoral Candidate LGBT Questionnaire

## Advisory Council

- 1. What role will the Advisory Council on LGBT Issues have in your Administration? Additionally, what role will the Director of the Advisory Council have in your Administration?*

Bill Greaves has done an outstanding job as Director of the City's Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues. First asked to join the board in 1995, Bill has served as the Council's Director, a post he has held since 2000. The Advisory Council has been a model for other cities and units of government throughout Illinois and the country. Whether engaging with community groups on issues of importance to them, supporting LGBT Hall of Fame events, or ensuring the Mayor has a clear and continued understanding of the LGBT's agenda, the Advisory Council is an important and treasured voice in Chicago. I will work to strengthen and expand the Advisory Council, and remain committed to ensuring that all communities and all Chicagoans are not only heard by my administration, but also have the opportunity to participate in meaningful ways.