

General

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

I will protect the gains made by the LGBT community. I have a long record of standing up for LGBT rights. I am proud to have the distinction of not only being the first African-American Woman elected to the US Senate, but also being the first senator to ever appoint a LGBT liaison to my staff. I was a staunch and outspoken opponent to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, where I was one of only twelve votes against the measure. I supported hate crimes legislation and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which has unfortunately yet to become enacted. I have also been a consistent and vocal supporter of marriage rights, believing LGBT Americans have a fundamental right to marry the persons they love. When the so-called Defense of Marriage Act was approved by the Senate, myself and my Illinois colleague, the late Sen. Paul Simon, cast two of the only 14 votes against it. Because of my extensive record on the issue, I am the proud holder of the "Friend of the Community" designation from the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.

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?

Anything less than complete fairness and equality for the LGBT community is utterly unacceptable. I support working within my full capacity as mayor to ensure the proper actions are taken in Chicago and Springfield to ensure just measures are taken to achieve these rights.

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.

Yes. I support the passage of the civil union legislation in Springfield but consider it only the first step. Our goal must be to ensure complete marriage equality in rights and benefits for same-sex couples.

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?

To begin, I support the hiring of an educator as superintendent for the Chicago Public Schools from the ranks of CPS. Further, sensitivity to issues facing LGBT youth must be a quality of the next superintendent. As mayor, I plan to work with the superintendent to ensure anti-bullying measures are taken to protect our youth, in addition to implementing violence-prevention measures such as peer mediation to increase sensitivity of all students about the issues facing LGBT youth.

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

Yes

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

Partnerships between the Office of the Mayor, Chicago Public Schools, other government entities, as well as non-profits and the public sector will enhance our ability to properly and efficiently implement informative LGBTQ topics in public school curriculum. I will also support system-wide sex-education related to appropriate HIV and STI prevention issues with the partnership of experts in these fields.

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.?

As mayor, I will support measures which keep our children safe inside and outside the classroom. This must include partnerships amongst students, staff, families, as well as law enforcement officers.

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?

To begin, I will appoint a CPS superintendent who is sensitive to the issues facing the LGBT community, especially students. In partnership with this new superintendent, I will build a coalition of parents, faculty, LGBT community leaders, and educators to ensure the epidemic of bullying is properly addressed and alleviated with increased awareness amongst all parties involved.

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?

A city-assessment must begin with an assessment of the needs of the community. I have a strong record of including the LGBT community and intend to continue this practice. Working in partnership with LGBT seniors, we will properly address the expansion of programs and events which include the community's rightful status as an important aspect in Chicago's rich cultural diversity.

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

To begin, we need to ensure fair representation of the LGBT community within the city's very own workforce. As mayor, opening the doors to City Hall will be another important step. Ensuring increased protection for seniors will also be a staple of my administration.

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

Youth Homelessness

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

To begin, I do support commissioning a study to get a comprehensive assessment of the LGBT youth homelessness epidemic. Further, I support increased sensitivity training for all municipal employees and organizations receiving city funds. These

actions, including increased availability of affordable housing, must also be implemented in partnership with the overall LGBT community.

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

As mayor, I plan to continue my record of supporting LGBT issues with increased support for fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. We must begin by holding the city, as well as organizations, accountable by establishing mandatory criteria for hiring standards and fair labor practices. This will be done in partnership with the 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 mayor, I will work to ensure more affordable housing options are available to our at-risk communities. I will also work to provide the proper resources are made available to shelters and organizations to better address the immediate dangers facing transgender individuals.

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

Municipal support for the transgender community begins with educating the public about the issues. Increased city-sensitivity must also occur with the fair and equitable treatment of the LGBT community in matters of hiring, healthcare, public safety, and housing.

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

Yes.

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?

I have a long record of supporting equal rights for same sex couples. Having served at both the state and federal levels, I intend to continue my advocacy for equal marriage rights as Mayor of Chicago.

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?

We need to make sure we direct our efforts in the right direction. I support evidence-based programs which target the most at-risk communities, in this case GBT youth and MSM who are African-Americans and Latinos. The Chicago Department of Health must be more efficiently utilized to increase awareness about HIV issues, as well as better support the efforts of the Black Gay Men's Caucus, Test Positive Aware Network, Center on Halsted, Howard Brown, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, South Side Help Center, Brother's Health Collective, and VIDA/SIDA. I also support following the trend of other major cities in beginning a coordinated campaign to distribute and promote the use of male and female condoms in an effort for HIV prevention, it being the most cost-effective measure to address this devastating disease.

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

Yes

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

Greater awareness amongst communities of color is the first step in implementing more efficient HIV prevention measures. Also, targeting preventative resources to the most at-risk communities must occur.

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

Increasing a partnership between non-profits and health clinics is an important first step. As mayor, I will also work to ensure a close relationship is developed between the LGBT community and the city's health departments to best provide medical needs and quality care.

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

As mayor, I will work to allocate resources to where they are most needed. Further, greater support must be given to community-based organizations. They are on the front-line of the battle against HIV and their input is an important asset to the city.

Public Safety

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

Yes

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

As mayor, I will mandate increased sensitivity training for both departments. These will include topics such as searches of transgender individuals, LGBT domestic violence and “hate crimes” and sexual assaults of LGBT individuals.

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

I was the first US Senator to appoint an LGBT liaison to my staff in 1993. I am proud of this distinction and believe it is an important step in establishing a prolonged dialogue with the LGBT community. I look forward to utilizing this model with the 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 believe a greater dialogue between the Chicago Police Department and the LGBT community must occur. Further, instituting guidelines to ensure humane treatment and respect will be one of the first steps in creating a stronger coalition between law enforcement, the LGBT community, and the Office of the Mayor.

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?

As Mayor, I will work closely with the Advisory Council and the Director on a regular basis. By facilitating a closer working relationship, the council will be better utilized to more efficiently address the issues facing the LGBT community, allowing for more targeted and proactive measures to be taken to ensure the fairness, equality, and respect they deserve.