

## 2019 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

<b>Candidate Name:</b>	Jacob Ringer, 43 <sup>rd</sup> Ward
<b>Ward:</b>	
<b>Campaign Committee Name &amp; Address:</b>	Ringer for Results [REDACTED]
<b>City:</b>	<b>Zip Code:</b> Chicago, IL 60614
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>Fax:</b> 312.544.9510
<b>Campaign Manager:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Campaign Office Address:</b>	2120 North Halsted Street
<b>City:</b>	<b>Zip Code:</b> Chicago, IL 60614
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>Fax:</b> 312.544.9510
<b>Email/Website:</b>	<a href="mailto:Jacob@Ringer4Results.com">Jacob@Ringer4Results.com</a> <a href="http://www.Ringer4Results.com">www.Ringer4Results.com</a>
<b>Are you a business owner? Yes/No:</b>	No
<b>If Yes, what type of business &amp; # of employees:</b>	

1. What is your position on the “Fair Workweek Ordinance” (O2018-5089)?

Please explain.

**If additional space is needed, please attach supplemental materials.  
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**Return by Thursday, January 31, 2019**  
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**While I support the idea of reasonable expectations for hours and scheduling for targeted industries, I believe that this ordinance is too broad and cumbersome.**

2. How would you continue to rebuild and invest in Chicago's aging infrastructure, especially mass transit? Where would you find revenue to support, if applicable.

Please explain.

**I have a long history of support for updating our infrastructure. I've advocated for an East-West bridge in the Lincoln Yards Devolvement to reduce congestion, and I was excited to see five bridges as part of recent proposals. We need to be realistic about our infrastructure deficit in the City and State. We especially need a capital bill to help with the many needed projects in our region. Furthermore, I believe the City's approach about using Federal matching programs and low interest loans such as TIFA should be continued and replicated as much as possible. I also support improved transit, biking and walking alternatives and will use aldermanic menu funds to enhance funding for this in our ward.**

3. How would you pay for and/or reform the City's unfunded pension obligations (estimated at \$42 billion)? Please explain your ideas and potential solutions.

Please explain.

**Last year marked the last installment, \$63 million, of the \$589 million property tax increase voted on by the City Council in 2016. There is more pain to come; The City owes an additional \$586 million annually to pension funds by 2022. In my time at the office of the Chief Financial Officer of the City I helped shine a spotlight on the unacceptable funding levels of our 4 pension funds and I understand this issue and the challenges we face. I worked with the first actuaries ever hired in the City of Chicago, unfortunately that was in 2011.**

**I strongly believe that the State – which passes pension laws that Chicago taxpayers must fund – should be part of the solution. City Council does not control the Illinois State Constitution or pension laws directly. However, under the current constitution, the Supreme Court has been clear and unequivocal in the right of City pensioners to receive their benefits. Until and unless that changes, pensions are a clear fiscal debt that the City of Chicago must pay for. The only way out of this problem is to bring in new revenue.**

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**We have to smart in how we do that. For example, I cannot believe that we are considering fiscally irresponsible pension obligation bonds. If the pension funds were to lose every cent of the pension obligation bond, taxpayers of Chicago would still be on the hook to pay for these obligations. Furthermore, the claimed arbitrage play is based on a rate of return set by the pension funds that has decreased in recent years and could fall even lower, thus eliminating any savings.**

**If we don't have leaders who understand City finances, we will continue to walk into traps like these. That is why we need my voice in City Council. I have a track record of delivering alternative revenue and I am the only candidate running anywhere in the City of Chicago who has delivered ongoing revenue without raising taxes, fines and fees. We need to look at every possibility to find alternative revenue sources like the digital billboard project I spearheaded when I worked for the City. That project is projected to bring in \$200 million over 20 years without reaching deeper into the pockets of Chicago taxpayers. Some ideas for alternative revenue sources include a casino, recreational marijuana, taxing retirement income, video gambling, a limited commuter tax, and municipal marketing. I also believe that there are potential partial privatization deals that could lead to smart investment by the City. City Council must exercise strong public oversight to ensure that any revenue-generating proposals are considered transparently, and the final outcomes are in the best interests of the City and its residents. I think my understanding of City finances and the challenges ahead will be invaluable to appropriately evaluate future financial proposals. I will be a unifying voice in City Council, working with both new and current aldermen to explore new sources of revenue and creative solutions for better government.**

4. In FY2019, the City's budget deficit is projected to be \$97.9 million. What are your ideas and proposals to improve the City's fiscal condition and balance the budget?

Please explain.

**I will evaluate City services and programs to look for waste and opportunities for more efficient service delivery. I believe we should look to every alternative before we ask property owners to fill another budget hole. I will proactively seek new and alternative revenue that doesn't come from property taxes. I support a variety of**

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**ideas for alternative revenue sources include a casino, recreational marijuana, taxing retirement income, video gambling, a limited commuter tax, municipal marketing, and potential partial privatization deals that could lead to smart investment by the City.**

5. Would you vote to increase the City's minimum wage above the scheduled increase on July 1, 2019 of \$13/hr. and tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)?

Please explain.

**I believe that we need a statewide solution to level the playing-field for Chicago businesses.**

6. Please advise what your thoughts are regarding economic development in Chicago and measures to attract and retain businesses. How would you utilize and reform Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts and the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) to support the city's economy and jobs?

Please explain.

**Economic development is vital to growing out of the city's fiscal challenges. We cannot simply tax or cut our way out, the only way forward is growth. I believe that reformed and carefully managed TIFs can be part of the solution to bring responsible economic development. We have a great example with the Lincoln Yards development. I have long advocated for infrastructure to address traffic congestion, and I was excited to see five bridges in recent proposals from the developer. I also called for a new neighborhood school to receive the influx of population from the development and I was happy that the developer committed to a neighborhood school as well. Without the TIF associated with this project, I know the City would be hard-pressed to fund such major infrastructure improvements. As this process moves forward, I think it can get to a place where I can support it because of the value it will add to the neighborhood in terms of jobs and economic investment.**

**I think the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund is another example of a tool that can be used to spur smart economic development. These funds are going from high**

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**investment areas to low investment areas that could be ripe for economic development with a little nudge. NOF gives a push of the primer to get that started and to expand Chicago's economic engines out from downtown and affluent wards. NOF is part of the solution to create broad-based growth in the City and to improve economic disparities between neighborhoods.**

**Of course, with such large sums of money involved, economic development tools need to be individually and continually evaluated. They should only be used to spur growth that would not have otherwise existed. I do believe future TIFs should expire upon completion of the project rather than on an arbitrary timescale and current TIFs should be individually reviewed to determine their continued viability.**

**I believe that growth through economic development is vitally important to addressing our core issues of crime, vacant storefronts and getting City finances back on track. As Alderman, I will do everything I can to help to support local businesses to fill our vacant storefronts by helping them navigate red-tape and community concerns. It sounds simple, but these are things that aren't happening now and we can see the difference in our commercial corridors which look like ghost towns compared to neighboring wards where storefronts are filled with vibrant local businesses.**

7. Do you support any specific type of revenue (tax) enhancement, like a soda tax, "head tax", "LaSalle Street" tax, or "commuter" tax?

Please explain.

**I do not support a LaSalle Street tax or Lakefront tax. I support a variety of ideas that are possible for alternative revenue sources. The LaSalle Tax would not ever collect \$1, since by law all the servers are backed up in New Jersey, and the business being taxed would be moved in minutes, not days or weeks. The head tax disincentives hiring and that is not the incentive we need right now.**

**I also think we need to evaluate current taxes and fees to determine whether they should continue. For example, the MPEA tax ostensibly is designed to support tourism that benefits the neighborhoods that pay it. In practice, residential**

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**neighborhoods are paying a tax that can be easily circumvented by shopping a few blocks away.**

**Alternative revenue I would like to investigate further include a casino, recreational marijuana, taxing retirement income, video gambling, a limited commuter tax, municipal marketing, and potential partial privatization deals.**

8. Do you support an elected school board? How would you include parents and community members on the Board and protect against special interests controlling the Board?

Please explain.

**I believe a hybrid board can preserve both accountability and the appropriate level of authority for the office of the Mayor while increasing community input. I am open to proposals for the make-up of such a board that include a balance of appointed or elected parents and community members.**

9. What is your position on the “Data Collection and Protection” Ordinance (O2018-3240)?

Please explain.

**I support improved data privacy and security. While I believe that this would best be addressed at the federal level, I think it is appropriate for Chicago to step up and set the tone on this issue in the absence of leadership from Washington.**

10. What are your top three policy priorities?

Please explain.

**Addressing violent crime with true community policing, filling our vacant storefronts through smart economic development and addressing City finances, and better managing City services and projects to solve every day problems in the neighborhood.**

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**While personally knocking over 8600 doors in our ward, I’ve heard an overwhelming majority of our neighbors say they are concerned about rising violent crime. Our ward is not immune to the trends across the City. We’ve seen violent daytime assaults, robberies, car-jackings, and more. The problem is, I haven’t seen our current alderman doing anything about it. We need more officers walking a beat with long-term assignments, so they get the local experience they need to serve the community. I’ve seen crime drive business from our neighborhood, exacerbating the vacant storefront problem.**

**We need to support local businesses to fill our vacant storefronts—not pretend there isn’t a problem. I will also work with local businesses to cut red tape that gets in the way of starting and growing new businesses. The same red tape exists across the City, but aldermen in other wards are actively helping navigate it. That is what I have heard from business owners of multiple locations throughout the City who say they won’t locate in our ward because the alderman won’t help business. When I am alderman, the 43<sup>rd</sup> ward will be open for business again.**

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