

# **SEIU** Illinois State Council Stronger Together

## **SERVICE EMPLOYEES' INTERNATIONAL UNION, STATE COUNCIL 2023 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**This questionnaire is for Candidates running for the following offices only:**

**City of Chicago Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk & Alderman**

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) State Council represents 150,000 Illinois workers in health care, property services, and the public sector. SEIU State Council is comprised of SEIU HCII, Local 1, and Local 73. This s Fall, the SEIU Illinois State Council will conduct an endorsement process to determine which candidates best support working families' issues and merit our endorsement for the 2023 municipal election on February 28, 2023.

Your responses to these questions will help us make endorsement decisions and may be used to communicate the difference between candidates to union members. Please be candid, complete, and forthright in your responses.

**Completed questionnaires must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on November 21st**

**Please email all questionnaires as an attachment to [general\\_email@seiuilcouncil.org](mailto:general_email@seiuilcouncil.org) with your name in the subject line and SEIU IL Council Completed Questionnaire. E.G., John Doe SEIU IL Council Completed Questionnaire**

The endorsement procedure is a two-step process. Once a completed questionnaire is submitted, candidates seeking an endorsement must interview with the SEIU COPE screening committee. Those screenings will take place virtually during after-business hours in early December.

Campaign Staff & Contact

Candidate Name \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Website \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Office Sought \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Campaign Budget

Amount Raised to Date \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Expected Budget \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Expected to Raise \_\_\_\_\_

**Our union unites essential workers of every race and background, in every state, keeping America fed, clean, safe, and healthy.** We care for your children and your aging loved ones. We keep public spaces and facilities clean and secure. We serve your food and keep you safe when you travel. We are on the frontlines of the pandemic, keeping our communities going. We are essential -- and we always have been. We're fighting for racial, economic, healthcare, immigrant, and climate justice. Our votes made the difference in the 2020 election. Now, we're ready to get to work to create an inclusive, resilient City where every Black life matters, every immigrant has a path to citizenship, and everyone who works for a living can feed their family and live a good life.

**Working people united in SEIU demand that 2023 candidates unabashedly champion economic and racial justice:** every worker should have the right to join a union, no matter where they work. Everyone should be able to vote freely and safely.

Together, we will build a just, resilient City where all working people can join together in unions and earn higher wages; where quality healthcare is accessible and affordable for all and everyone has a secure retirement; where immigrant families are able to stay together; where all communities have access to quality public services; where we dismantle anti-Black and structural racism and achieve equality for all people regardless of gender or sexual orientation; where every vote counts; where we all have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink; and where our economy and democracy work for all of us, not just millionaires and billionaires.

- **YES**, I believe in Unions for All and will fight so everyone, no matter where they work, can join a union. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, everyone in Chicago should have guaranteed access to quality, affordable healthcare. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, long term care and all healthcare jobs should be good union jobs. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, I stand with workers in the fight for higher wages who are demanding higher wages and union rights. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, I will work to protect voting rights so everyone can vote freely and safely. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, public dollars should be used to create good, union jobs. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, I support bold and urgent action to address climate change and the creation of a City of Chicago Department of the Environment. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, immigrant families should be welcome, safe, and free in Chicago. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, I support raising the Real Estate Transfer Tax and creating a dedicated revenue stream to ensure that more than 65,000 Chicagoans never have to worry about housing insecurity again. \_\_\_\_\_
- **YES**, I believe in rebuilding Chicago's public mental health infrastructure and support creating a non-police responder model for people experiencing mental health emergencies. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background**

1. Briefly describe your background, including personal, educational and professional information. If you currently or previously have been elected to office, please list what office and when. \*
2. Please list all your employers over the past five years and the nature of work you performed for each employer, including lobbying, consulting, and contractual employment. If applicable, please list all clients you have lobbied for, including which government entities you have lobbied on behalf of each client.
3. If elected, do you plan to seek or maintain employment outside of your role as an elected official? If so, please provide details as to the nature of work you intend to pursue.

4. Have you ever been convicted of a crime in a court of law? If so, please explain. \*

5. Have you ever been a member of a labor union, or do you have any connections to the labor movement? \*

### **Campaign Information**

6. Briefly state why you are seeking the SEIU'S endorsement. \*

7. Describe your strategy to win this race including how you will establish an effective campaign

committee to recruit volunteers and raise money for a successful campaign.

8. What are the main policy priorities of your campaign?

9. Have you received endorsements from other groups? If so, which ones?

## Policy Positions for the City of Chicago

**Protecting Workers' Rights.** The Koch Brothers, American Legislative Exchange Council, Chamber of Commerce and many others believe that eliminating unions in the public and private sector is the best way to grow the economy. The collective bargaining process promotes workplace stability and protects workers' rights, wages, benefits and working conditions. States which restrict collective bargaining rights have lower standards of living for all working families. Unfortunately previous Chicago Mayoral administrations have sought to restrict public sector workers' collective bargaining.

10. O'Hare and Midway airports are economic engines for the entire region, and the City of Chicago depends on revenue from airport concessions. Recently, SEIU Local 1, with unanimous support of city council, passed an ordinance that would create a labor peace agreement and increase labor standards for airport employees. Will you support the enforcement of the legislation passed by the city council?

11. Major hospital systems are the largest low wage employers in the Chicago area by total employment. Many hospital workers live paycheck to paycheck and face threats and intimidation for organizing a union. Would you support Hospital worker's rights to organize and hold employers accountable to anti-union behavior, and if so, how?
12. Negotiations for collective bargaining agreements often extend years past the expiration date of the prior agreement. Would you work with the Administration and Labor Unions representing those workers toward an agreement in an acceptable timeframe?
13. The city of Chicago invests in projects such as airports, sports stadiums, convention centers and hotels using a variety of economic incentives. Are you in favor of requiring developers and operators of such establishments to obtain labor peace agreements to protect the City's proprietary interests in these cases? Would you support an ordinance to this effect?

14. SEIU Local 1 represents door staff and residential workers in high rises and residential buildings across all our markets. Various Owners and operators of residential and commercial buildings frequently seek to use public money to defray their costs. Will you commit to supporting the idea that Residential and Commercial buildings that seek any type of public subsidies should be operated by union workers?

15. SEIU Local 1 represents janitors and security officers who have worked hard throughout the years to bargain for good wages and benefits. The City of Chicago and its sister agencies through their procurement process have undercut the work that SEIU Local 1 members have bargained for in the private sector by putting out work to bid with lower wages and benefits. Will you help to make sure that all the work put out to bid by the City of Chicago and its sister agencies have the standards and benefits earned by SEIU Local 1 members in the private sector?

16. SEIU Local 73 represents over 5,000 workers for the city of Chicago – this includes crossing guards, park district employees, and parking enforcement aides. Increasingly, these workers are put in dangerous encounters while providing essential city services. Workers have reported being physically chased by angry residents, verbal altercations, sexual harassment, etc. Would you support a measure to increase penalties for harming our public employees?

17. Would you be willing to provide public support for employees in other sectors seeking to organize and meeting employer resistance by (check as many as applicable):

- i. Speaking at a rally?
- ii. Calling on an employer to allow employees to make their own decision?
- iii. Meeting with or sending a letter to employees to support their right to organize a union?

## **Revenue**

18. It is widely recognized that the City of Chicago's current revenue streams are not sufficient to fund services that are vital to City residents and to fulfill the City's obligations to employee pension funds. What new measures would you support to raise additional revenue to ensure that the City of Chicago is meeting its pension obligations and the needs of its citizens?

19. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program has been an active yet controversial portion of the city budget. How would you manage or reform this program?

## **Retirement Security**

20. In 2013 the city of Chicago began an effort to eliminate health care coverage to City retirees. As a result, the city has eliminated subsidies to almost all the retirees for such coverage, causing considerable

hardship for many retirees who have only modest pensions and do not receive Social Security or, in some cases, Medicare. Will you support efforts to establish a retiree health insurance program to ensure that affordable health care is available to City retirees for whom the City's elimination of subsidies has created a financial hardship?

21. Would you oppose any further attempts to cut to pension benefits for current or future City employees and retirees?

22. The Illinois General Assembly has previously passed legislation that drastically reduced pension benefits for all employees hired after 2010. These steep reductions, while constitutionally permissible, do not provide adequate retirement security for City employees who do not receive Social Security. Would you support improving the retirement security of City employees impacted by these changes?

### **Privatization**

23. Chicago has a history of unsuccessful privatization deals that have increased costs to City residents and resulted in layoffs of City employees. Would you support efforts to establish stronger oversight of city contracts to ensure that cost savings claimed by privatization are real and do not cause lower quality of services for City residents, cuts in employee wages, or elimination of family supporting jobs? Would you support efforts that ensure any further asset privatization be based on demonstrable savings over the long-term, not just short-term gain?

24. Do you believe the City of Chicago should ask employees represented by unions for concessions when the city has private contractors with sub-standard wages performing the same duties as those same employees?

25. Would you support legislation prohibiting companies that willfully violate labor laws (including the Minimum Wage and Overtime, Prevailing Wage, and National Labor Relations Acts) from receiving city contracts or grants permanently or for a defined period of time?

### **Chicago Public Schools**

10,000 SEIU Local 73 members work in public elementary and high schools. SEIU Local 73 members believe that public and charter schools alike should be held to high standards. These standards include health and safety standards, civil rights requirements, accountability and transparency at individual campuses, and the requirement to employ only highly qualified classroom professionals.

26. Please describe your ideas for revenue to fully fund and provide equity within Chicago Public Schools.

27. Describe your position on the privatization of facilities in CPS.

28. Due to the privatization of school buses, some CPS students commute over 1-2 hours each direction to their designated schools despite the legally mandated 60-minute cap on travel. Would you support efforts to hold private companies that provide public services accountable?

29. Would you support requiring charter schools to meet the same requirements as traditional public schools, particularly as they relate to access for all students and accountability and transparency by individual campuses?

### **Inflation & Economic Impact**

30. Research has found that increasing Chicago's minimum wage would not only help many low wage workers but would also help the city's economy. Would you support a \$25/hour minimum wage to bring more money into the working-class economy and grow the tax base?

31. For tens of thousands of workers with dispersed workplaces – such as home care workers who provide long-term care services in seniors' homes – the Chicago minimum wage and sick leave ordinances do

not cover their work in the city if the employer locates their office outside the city. Would you support closing this loophole?

32. Chicago's economy is fueled by growth in retail, food service, hospitality and healthcare. But too many people working in these hourly service jobs can't keep up with unpredictable, last-minute fluctuating workweeks over which they have little to no control. The City Council is considering the Fair Workweek ordinance which would, among other things, require a two-week advance notice of scheduling, provide an extra hour of pay for someone called into work who was not previously scheduled, and allow a minimum 11-hour rest period between shifts. This ordinance will affect companies with more than 50 employees nationwide and workers who make less than \$50,000 a year. Exempt industries include construction, railway, City of Chicago sister agencies, and those under a collective bargaining agreement (exemption only for the life of current contract). By our best projection, this ordinance will affect around 250,000 workers in the City of Chicago. Would you support this ordinance?

**Childcare**

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) workforce is among the lowest paid professions, despite being one of the highest credentialed workers and providers. In 2021, Child care educators in Illinois make on average \$27,900 per year, and licensed child care providers are making a little over \$4 per hour while working on average 70.5 hours per week. For comparison, an entry-level CPS Pre-K teacher started their career making at least \$72,000 per year in the same year. License-exempt providers, also known as Family, Friends, and Neighbor (FFN) providers fare even worse. Their daily rates in 2020 could at best receive rates that would cover about a third of the cost of care for two children.

The State's largest child care program, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), has historically set center and home-based child-care rates based on market rates, i.e., how much parents can afford for child care in the private market in a geographical area. However, these market rates do not reflect the true cost of high-quality child care. Daily rates fail to account for provider and assistants wages, child care expenses, and other costs to running a home child care.

In the case of child care centers, private pay and public funding are also insufficient to provide a livable wage to workers. Expensive tuitions in private or partially publicly-funded centers do not reflect the true cost of care, leading to wage compression of workers and educators. The same situation happens to ELCC programs supported by State and Federal funding (such as Head Start, CCAP, or Preschool for All), which does not provide the financial support to recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

On top of that, the ELCC workforce lacks support such as paid time off, paid professional development days, retirement, affordable health insurance, and scholarship/student loan debt relief to advance their career pathways and increase quality of care.

33. Would you commit using your voice and political influence on the city level to strengthening the early childhood workforce by developing policies to improve retention of providers from the same communities they serve, investing in professional development for workers to advance their career pathways, and establishing adequate compensation levels for those working in publicly funded early care and education programs that include living wages for home child care providers and parity with k-12 educators in community-based settings?

34. In CPS, a health aide after July 2022 starts their career at almost \$37,000 per year under SEIU Local 73 contract, while an entry-level teacher under covered by CTU's contract will start their career making at least \$64,000 per year. These workers were able to get strong contracts by using their collective voice. Would you use your political influence to support city-wide center organizing, which will amplify child care center workers voices in their fight for unionization, wages, and better working conditions across the city?

35. Currently, home child care providers are not allowed to access Preschool For All (PFA) funding, part of the state's Child Care and Development Fund administered by the Illinois State Board of Education. Would you support programs for 3- and 4-year-olds in both school- and community-based settings?

36. Please list any additional information that you would like us to consider