

Chicago Tribune Questionnaire

Name *

Derek Lindblom

Ward you are running in *

43rd Ward

Campaign contact person and phone *

Kyle Gibson [REDACTED]

Date of Birth *

September 14, 1981

Portrait (please attach) *

Home address *

[REDACTED]

Office address *

2733 N Halsted, Chicago, IL

Occupation. Please be specific; titles and proper names. *

Vice President at 7wire Ventures (on a leave of absence to run for office)

Sources of outside income *

All my investments are publicly traded funds except for options/shares in Livongo Health (the successful diabetes company I helped found) and the 7wire Ventures healthcare fund.

If elected, I will be a full-time Alderman and leave my previous job.

Spouse occupation. Please be specific; titles and proper names *

My wife is a Partner at Bain & Company (Chicago office).

Please list any relatives who work for a government body or lobby, consult or hold contracts with a government body. Be specific. *

None.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Please explain *

No

Previous political experience *

I served in the Mayor's Office from 2011-2014 as the Chief of Staff to the Mayor's Economic Council where I worked as the City's lead policy negotiator on pensions from 2013-2014 as well as many other financial and economic policy issues (described below).

I served as a Legislative staffer on the Senate Judiciary Committee from 2003 - 2005 for Sen. Charles Schumer as well.

Education *

Harvard College, Class of 2003, *magna cum laude*.

Harvard Law School, Class of 2008, *cum laude*, President - Harvard Law & Policy Review.

Why should voters elect you and not your opponents?

Throughout my career, I have made it a priority to run at hard problems, not run away from them.

That work includes my time in the Mayor's office where I volunteered to work on the hardest problems facing the City. I was able to bring people together and create coalitions for real reform on exceedingly difficult issues like pensions. I've worked in the United States Senate on gun laws, privacy rights, and women's rights. I've helped found health tech companies that have improved the lives of people with diabetes by bringing cutting-edge technology and personal support to diabetes-management.

None of these were easy issues with easy solutions. Instead, I've made a point in my career to take on the toughest issues, bring people together, and get to solutions that would make the biggest impact for the most people. I will approach the job as Alderman the exact same way and I think that's what the City needs more than anything else.

What do you see as the city's number one challenge in the next four years?

Underlying all of the City's challenges, including Safety, Schools, Jobs, Economic Development, and everything else, is the City's financial situation. If the City is unable to stabilize its long-term financial situation, any gains we've made (e.g. in Education) are put at-risk and our most difficult challenges (e.g. Public Safety) will go from difficult to nearly intractable in a financial crisis.

I'm someone who's worked on these issues up-close at the highest levels. I've led the City's policy in negotiating with Labor on pensions and know the challenges, the players involved, and the possibilities. There is hope here, but we have to be creative and City Council has to produce solutions instead of just being another cost center.

Do you favor or oppose a city-owned casino in Chicago?

I support a city-owned Chicago casino close to the Indiana border or as part of a convention center complex. I think the appropriate goal with a Chicago casino should be to maximize revenue while minimizing any additional cost to both the economically-challenged and middle class in Chicago. A casino close to the Indiana border, for example at the Port District, will simply move gambling a few blocks. However, these few blocks will make a gigantic difference to the City as the tax revenue will shift from northwestern Indiana to Chicago. Additionally, a smaller, high-end casino as part of McCormick place would principally serve conventioners and tourists. Both these options would minimize the additional Chicagoans who would gamble while maximizing the City's revenue without raising property taxes.

Do you favor or oppose electing Chicago's school board?

I believe the Chicago School Board should have 1-3 elected representatives to act as a check and balance to prevent corruption and introduce new ideas. No good governmental system is run by only one actor without any corresponding check or balance. I believe this hybrid model strikes the right balance between an independent perspective and voice while still having the ability to get tough things done and avoid the diffused responsibility often inherent in large committees.

I worry that an all elected 21-member committee would not have clear leadership and would fail to have either a strategic vision for the schools or be able to drive implementation of any vision effectively. Perhaps most importantly, by removing any accountability for the schools from the Mayor, you would be taking away a critical player pushing for CPS in Springfield. CPS depends significantly on funding from Springfield and the City needs to bring all its biggest powers to bear to fight for our kids. Putting the Mayor completely on the sidelines in those fights is the wrong move for Chicago.

How should CPS respond to shrinking enrollment?

This is a two-pronged answer and only the first half is directly on CPS:

- The first part is CPS needs to provide a superior educational value-proposition to parents so they choose CPS. We've had a lot of success in my Ward building great public schools with parents and principals working together (including at my son's future school, Oscar Mayer). We need to replicate that model of active Local School Councils and parents groups as much as possible. Where we have to make tough decisions, we need to prioritize educational experience of the kids (including the financial stability that facilitates a strong educational experience) over any other factor.
- The second part is on the City as a whole to combat our current population decline and grow the population. The number one driver of CPS enrollment is the City's population. We need to focus on driving great economic opportunities and quality of life so we reverse our population decline and grow the pool of parents for CPS. We can also advocate for smart immigration policy at the federal level that emphasizes cities as an intake area, encouraging a healthy flow of skilled immigration to Chicago.

Our schools need more kids, full-stop. The best way to do that is building a City where more families want to raise their kids and also live themselves.

What's your game plan for reducing violent crime?

I have a five-point plan for reducing violent crime in our neighborhood and the City as a whole:

- 1) Better Training & Management for Police. Until recently, Chicago was the only leading U.S. city without any ongoing training requirement for police. Major U.S. cities have shown real success with focused, yearly officer training in effective policing and long-term community relations. Training must be the cornerstone of Chicago's efforts to comply with the new federal consent decree. This should not be limited to just the front-lines, but should include training throughout a Police career, including in higher-level management.

Training and management is especially important for our Detective Bureau, where our clearance rates are the key place where we can make a short-term impact on crime in the City. Right now clearance rates on serious crime are so low that they fail to create adequate deterrence (e.g. the low shooting clearance rate). We can ensure detectives receive continued training throughout their careers to keep current on emerging technology as well as trends in crime, particularly how to leverage social media evidence, as those platforms are increasingly used in connection with violent crime. Then, by working with the State's Attorney's office to create a feedback loop on what cases lead to successful prosecutions, Police leadership can actively manage the detective bureau based on successful case outcomes instead of just number of suspects identified. Reestablishing successful deterrence won't stop all crime, but low clearance rates and the absence of clear direct consequences allow for an impunity that we cannot continue to tolerate.

- 2) Invest in mental and behavioral healthcare. We know a significant percent of our crime is committed by people with serious mental and behavioral health challenges. By investing in this area we can produce a significant positive return in reduced crime, reduced jail occupancy, and cultivating additional taxpayers and contributing members of society. There's a huge opportunity to do much of this through Medicaid funding in the Affordable Care Act that could allow the City & County to leverage much of the County's existing healthcare infrastructure and be nearly cost-neutral in behavioral healthcare expansion.
- 3) Leverage safety cameras and use home and doorbell cameras to catch criminals and discourage crime. As camera and sensor technology has continued to become much cheaper and exponentially more effective, we need to take advantage of this opportunity to build a next-generation Police force. We can also take advantage of recent trends of homeowners buying doorbell cameras and set up voluntary integration into our police networks for use in pursuit and investigations. By placing additional City cameras at major public intersections and integrating additional voluntary camera networks we can provide real-time decision-making capabilities on deployment, as significant evidence for detectives building cases.

For just 8% of the Aldermanic menu budget for one term, we could have cameras set up at all of our Ward's major intersections and linked directly to our district's Strategic

Decision Support Centers for real-time crime prevention. All other nearby Lakefront Alderman are investing in these cameras with their Aldermanic budget to protect their constituents - we should too. When combined with our Ward's already extensive doorbell camera network, we could give our local Police a tremendous advantage at catching criminals and deterring crime.

- 4) Double and triple-down on community and mentoring programs with proven returns and move away from programs that don't produce results. We need to be firm in making sure every dollar goes to programs that actually help kids and not to benefit the adults who run failing programs. The University of Chicago has led the way on data-driven social programs and we should use the new Office of Violence Prevention to create a unified, data-driven strategy for violence prevention instead of a scattered array of often unproven programs cannibalizing each other for dollars.
- 5) Make gun violence prevention our number one Police priority. To make real progress against gun violence, we have to stem the flow of illegal guns. This starts with cracking down on straw purchasers and bad actor gun shops who arm entire gangs with illegally transferred guns after a buying spree at one of these shops. It follows by updating our gun laws to make it a felony to transfer an illegal gun to a minor when that gun is used in a crime. Finally, while the federal ban stops the public health study of gun crime at the Federal level, we can work with other willing cities and many states to form a consortium to study gun crime's public health implications. We need to be creative to get around the prohibitions at the federal level on making progress on gun violence prevention.

While we're taking these actions to reduce violent crime, let's also communicate better about public safety with our constituents with public safety transparency and visualization. We have great granular data on public safety but very few people are using it. I would create a significant web presence focused on public safety in the Ward. This would include heat maps, graphs, and tracking the arrest record and court outcomes of major crimes. Residents would have a central place to go to understand public safety in our community in a visual, easy-to-digest format. Then we can expand that area as an online center for neighbors to connect with each other, form block clubs, interact with their local CAPS officers and Strategic Decision Support Center, hear from local criminal justice experts, and better work together to build a stronger, safer community.

What's your strategy for dealing with the city's pension crisis?

During my time in the Mayor's office, I was the lead policy negotiator on pensions in 2013-2014 that resulted in the SB 1922 bill that was backed by 28 of 31 City Union Locals and the Tribune Editorial Board. While most of those reforms were struck down by the Illinois Supreme Court, they helped confront the pension funding challenges for the first-time and reversed decades of kicking the can. I have worked closely on pensions and I am passionate about ensuring that we

have a stable city financial structure. As we tackle the significant challenges that still remain we can only be successful if we do it together.

I don't think we're done yet. The City is still facing increasing ramp payments and the long-term health of the funds is still dependent on assumptions that may or may not play out depending on the rate of inflation and long-term stock market returns. This is especially true given the recent market correction/borderline bear market. Going forward we're going to have to deal with these issues together in a thoughtful and creative way that's cognizant of both the real impact on retirees and their families and the burden borne by the taxpayers.

In short, I don't think we can take anything off the table on pensions. The problem is too large and too serious to rule out any reform efforts at this point. Preventive change is massively preferable to a bankruptcy scenario that would result in significant pain all-around. We don't know how the market, inflation, or the political possibilities will pan out and I think it's critical to have any option available, including circumscribed constitutional change that frees the City and Labor to negotiate with each other, as part of that toolkit.

There's no route to solving this issue long-term that doesn't involve serious negotiations, and I think I have the experience and record to be able to do that successfully.

Should the use of TIFs continue or should they be phased out? Explain your reasoning.

TIF has a long and checkered history in our city, but has also funded significant public infrastructure projects. We can't get rid of TIF without a plan to make up for the sizable infrastructure investment TIF provides. However, we can radically reform the TIF program to stop the leakage of taxpayer dollars to useless or near-useless programs with little-to-no public good.

First, let's reform TIF so it's completely transparent. Every year, let's publish a TIF-budget like the City's general budget, that details every project and where the money is going. If sunlight is the best disinfectant, let's put TIF in the desert at high noon.

Second, let's ban any TIF dollars being given as profit to developers and private companies. The City is simply not well-positioned to judge when to hand over public dollars to a private entity (if ever) and the potential for abuse and corruption is simply too high.

Third, let's limit TIF spending to three essential items: Public infrastructure, parks, and public schools (specifically the physical building needs of our public schools). These are clear public priorities that have limited funding streams and where TIF has a clear and necessary role. Infrastructure, parks, and public schools are a critical part of the new development and revitalization TIF is intended to produce.

Finally, let's look into potentially changing the State law and taking TIF from zoned and geographically-bound usages to a more flexible City-infrastructure fund. This could be a valuable revenue source for public infrastructure, parks, and public schools (specifically the physical building needs), while not obeying frequently nonsensical geographic limitations.

How would you address the city's problems with lead in drinking water?

Short-term, we need to leverage the City opening up streets as an opportunity for cost-effective service line repair. Start by giving homeowners the option to pay for the City to replace their water service lines when the street is already being opened up for water, gas, or other repairs (similar to the CDOT concierge function). In addition, if a group of homes on a street wants to open up the street together, they can split the cost of the street opening as well. Since the opening up of the street in the first place is a large portion of the expense, the homeowners can save a large portion of the cost of repair in either scenario. We can then take a slight charge from that cost (less than a private sector operator's profit margin) and use it to help fund service line repairs in communities where residents with serious lead problems cannot afford to fund the repairs themselves.

Medium-term, we need to rethink how we approach service lines and potential lead issues. This starts by getting better data on the scale and cost of the problem and potential solutions and finishes with identifying the financing to get it done. The scope of the problem may require action on the State or Federal level as well (we'll know more once we have a better idea of the scale of the issue in Chicago). Lead is a significant danger from a child development and public safety perspective, and we've got to get ahold of this problem and be prepared to prioritize investment here. Doing nothing here is not an option.

If you believe Chicago needs new tax revenue, where do you think it should come from?

The best two options are a cannabis tax and a smartly-located casino. We should also explore potential sports-betting at Chicago stadiums (New Jersey has seen significant tax revenue in their early numbers from this approach).

Beyond this, I think any other options have to be the last resort, not the first choice. I also think we have to drop our fixation with the property tax as the eventual solution to all problems. Let's focus on everything else before reaching for more revenue. Then, only if we must, let's look at revenue sources where we're an outlier on the low end compared to other cities and states. For example, let's stay away from the property tax and other areas where we're already quite high compared to our peer cities.

What should the city council do to make itself more independent from the mayor's office?

I would champion an independent City Council with two key actions:

1. The single most important thing the City Council can do to establish independence is to remove the ability of the Mayor's office to pick who runs City Council and then actually fulfill its oversight duties through its committee structure. To do this we need to remove the Mayor from the committee chair selection process.

-- Overall City Council leadership positions and Committee chairs should be selected by a secret ballot of the Alderman. The City Council should choose its leadership the same way Congressional Caucuses choose theirs. The initial Committee assignment process for new Alderman and Alderman changing committees should be a lottery-based system (Alderman could of course choose to remain on the committees they already serve).

-- City Council should also create a more robust subcommittee system that allows significantly more Alderman to call a hearing in their specific areas of expertise (this should not be accompanied by any additional staff or other costs). This would help remove the ability of any Mayor to prevent hearing on controversial subjects.

2. The City Council needs to empower the institutions that will lead to its independence. A truly independent financial and budget analysis function for City Council is an important start to reclaiming their "power of the purse". The City's Board of Ethics and Inspector General's can be empowered to root out the corruption in City Council to give independent efforts more room to thrive and grow. All City Council programs, including workers' comp, should be subject to thorough public oversight by the Inspector General and a public committee process. The City's annual budget process should include a more thorough amendment process where every Alderman can put forward several budget amendments for a full council vote. The more empowered City Council's institutions are, the better Alderman will be able to stand up to pressure from the Mayor's Offices and propose alternative ideas and solutions.

What's the most pressing issue facing the people of your ward and how would you address it?

The most pressing issue facing my Ward is the same as the most pressing issue facing our City as a whole: The City's financial situation. The City has serious legacy debts which have created an already fast-rising tax liability in my Ward and elsewhere. The City continues to face increased legacy liability costs, legacy infrastructure investment needs, and is vulnerable to market-fluctuations even further increasing its pension payments as well. We need someone

who is going to creatively address these cost challenges without further spiking our property tax payments or creating an income tax. This issue underlies our other critical issues of safety, education, and so much more. If we don't successfully address this issue, it has the potential to devastate the long-term future of my Ward and the City as a whole.