

Illinois Attorney General 2018 Election Guide



Kwame Raoul (D)

The Illinois Attorney General's Office has wide-ranging authority in the implementation and enforcement of policies regarding gender violence. With this in mind, anti-violence experts from six Chicago-based organizations - Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, Life Span, Resilience (formerly known as Rape Victims Advocates), Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, and Women Employed - asked AG Candidates to complete a questionnaire regarding their plans for addressing gender violence in Illinois.

All of these organizations are 501(c)(3) nonprofits, and are nonpartisan entities that do not support or oppose individual candidates or political parties.

All responses are posted as submitted on October 16, 2018.

No part of this Election Guide may be construed to be an endorsement of either candidate's campaign or views by the six organizations listed above.

Kwame Raoul's response did not conform to the format of the questionnaire, which is included below his reply to provide context.

Kwame Raoul's response:

Gender-based violence encompasses a variety of crimes, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, human trafficking, and domestic violence. This epidemic affects every community throughout Illinois, but in particular women and girls.

Issues surrounding gender-based violence encompass a significant portion of the Attorney General's work, including domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, civil rights and victims' rights. As a pro-choice policymaker committed to equal rights, I stand with women on all fronts, and I am committed to working to empower and assist women seeking justice and compassionate, respectful care after surviving gender-based violence.

As Attorney General, I will use the authority and influence of the Office to advance causes that provide more resources and better services for victims of crimes, by ensuring that victim assistance funding is equitably distributed to the communities and populations that need it most. I plan to work closely with the advocacy community and the Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board to improve training so that law enforcement officers understand the impact of these crimes and how to interact with and assist survivors. I will also work with state's attorneys around the state to improve charging and prosecution rates. I will continue the work of my predecessor on SANE, CVCA and other programming to assist survivors of violent crime, working with the advocacy community as issues arise and evolve.

On the legislative front, I will partner with legislative champions on these issues - working with advocates, community organizations, the Office of the Governor to advance legislation ensure we fill in gaps, address evolving issues and maximize resources. I will advocate for a budget that allows for staffing to implement the programs we need to protect victims' rights. This includes identifying and applying for federal grant opportunities to increase programming and adopt best practices, and I will partner with the community, agencies and the federal government to support those programs.

I will work hard to ensure office culture is one of inclusion and respect. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and as Attorney General, I will ensure my staff is trained and held to the highest standards. My office will research and develop best practices that can be accessed by governmental agencies and the public throughout the states to implement in their workplaces.

Shortly after Election Day, I expect to quickly put together a transition team addressing a number of substantive areas, and the issue of gender-based violence will be incorporated in the planning. I will outreach to members of the advocacy community to be a part of these conversations to ensure the Office of the AG continues to be a strong partner to these organizations and will give these critical issues the attention and resources they need to serve all of the communities of Illinois.

The Office of Attorney General plays a significant role in addressing the needs of survivors of gender-based violence, one which is constantly evolving. By fostering strong partnerships and coalitions with advocates, we will increase the opportunity for these needs to be appropriately and fully addressed. I am committed to making this happen as the next Attorney General of Illinois.

Original Questionnaire:

Illinois Attorney General Candidate Questionnaire November, 2018

1. What are your priorities as Attorney General of Illinois?
2. Please describe your staffing priorities as it relates to violence against women and girls, including:
 - a. A Violence Against Women Policy Director focusing exclusively on these issues? If yes, what do you see as the first three priorities they will work on?
 - b. A SANE Coordinator?
 - c. Appointed staff to monitor that law enforcement agencies have comprehensive policies that align with the Sexual Assault Incident Procedure Act and hold them accountable to following them?
 - d. Will you have appointed staff to prioritize law enforcement responses to domestic violence?
3. What would be your legislative efforts to address gender-based violence?
4. How will your office address workplace harassment and discrimination, particularly sexual harassment?

5. How will you commit to working with the advocacy community on training, legislation and other efforts to ensure that survivors have full access to protection via protective orders across the state?
6. What will be the AGO's role in ensuring compliance with the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act?
7. As Attorney General, how would you ensure that children who survive domestic, dating, and sexual violence that occurs at school or off-school premises maintain equal access to K-12 education spaces? How will you ensure not only that they stay safe, but successfully complete their education?
8. How will you ensure that the Student Resource Officers' training that is now required under SB 2925 includes appropriately responding to domestic and sexual violence situations and to survivors?
9. What are your priorities for use of Crime Victim's Compensation?
10. Since the Attorney General administers Violent Crime Victim Assistance (VCVA) and the Domestic Violence Fund to domestic violence and sexual assault agencies (as well as other agencies), what is your commitment to maintaining (or increasing) that fund? Are there any changes you foresee in the way this funding is administered?
11. Many survivors of domestic and sexual violence hesitate to report the violence to law enforcement because of historical distrust on how they will be treated. Given that, the violence against women community is invested in learning how the AG's office will work to restore trust between Chicago communities and CPD, particularly around the findings and recommendations from the Department of Justice Investigation as they relate to these issues. What are your plans on CPD accountability related to DOJ investigation and the role of the Attorney General?
12. What do you see as additional barriers to survivors in the following communities?
 - a. Communities of Color
 - b. Immigrant Communities
 - c. LGBTQ Communities
 - d. What do you see the role of the Attorney General's Office in assisting in overcoming these barriers?