



Chicago Mayor 2019 Election Guide

Candidate: Willie L. Wilson

The Office of the Mayor has many responsibilities that impact those who have experienced domestic abuse, human trafficking and sexual violence, including drafting and managing a \$8 billion-plus annual budget, appointing nominees to lead Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Police Department (among other entities), and advocating for the needs of city residents. With this in mind, anti-violence experts from five Chicago-based organizations - Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, Life Span, Resilience, and Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law asked mayoral candidates to complete a questionnaire regarding their plans for addressing gender violence in Chicago. Municipal governments like Chicago have the unique opportunity to step in and support those at risk of domestic abuse, human trafficking, and sexual violence particularly because of the gridlock and divisiveness in federal government and state government systems that can directly harm those we serve.

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

This candidate's response was received past the Jan. 22 deadline.

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

Questions

Please answer the following questions with a Yes or No response.

1. Do you support an elected school board?

Yes.

2. Do you support eliminating the rent control ban?

No.

3. Have you asked an employee, supervisee, colleague, consultant, contractor (or similar) to sign a non-disclosure agreement after learning of claims of sexual harassment or gender or race discrimination against you or someone on your staff?

No.

4. Will you continue or /expand the new Office of Violence Prevention approved for 2019 budget?

I would need to study success or failure of department once I have access to data

5. Will you prioritize a response to violence against women and girls by creating a high level, policy position in your office that specifically focuses on domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking?

I will certainly prioritize but may not be with a position. Only after being elected Mayor and being able to assess personnel would I be able to make an informed decision.

Please answer the following questions in 300 words or less.

1. Violence against women and girls is an epidemic in our community and requires a comprehensive public health and safety response. Please describe your staffing priorities as it relates to violence against women and girls, including level of response in the Office on Public Safety, Department of Family and Support Services and any other departments you believe are important.

We must ensure that we have the departments from children and family services properly staffed and all vacancies filled. We then must ensure that we are enforcing all the laws that are on the books and identify any new laws that may be necessary to protect these vulnerable individuals.

2. The Mayor's office has been in the position to both defeat and support critical legislative efforts in the past. What would be your legislative efforts to address gender-based violence?

I believe we are all created equal and that we all deserve equal protection under the law. We must enforce the laws vigorously especially for anyone who is defenseless.

3. Historically survivors of domestic and sexual violence hesitate to report the violence to law enforcement because of distrust on how they will be treated. How will you work to restore trust between Chicago communities, specifically survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking and CPD, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations from the Department of Justice Investigation on police accountability and mishandling of these investigations? Are there any recent Aldermanic proposals that you support?

You must ensure that we have people working in the Police Department and in the Department of Family and Children Services that reflect all of the people in our 77 communities in Chicago. We need a culture of inclusion of both race and gender as a working staff to ensure that the victims have an individual they can identify with and confide in when they need them.

4. Chicago Public Schools has failed student-survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual harm. Recent media coverage has brought these failures to light and spurred some movement to address this failure. How will you ensure that CPS takes the necessary steps so that student-survivors are able to stay in school, stay safe, and succeed academically, regardless of who the perpetrator is, where or when the violence occurred, and whether or not criminal remedies are pursued?

The 500+ cases of sexual abuse and assault in the Chicago Public School system is simply scandalous. I would insist on a full investigation with a special prosecutor to find every single individual who assaulted a child in our school system and prosecute them to the full extent of the law. After setting this example, I would direct the superintendent of the school system to put every safeguard in place that is necessary, above and beyond, to meet our number one priority – protecting our children. They are in our care when they're in school and they are our responsibility. No expense is too great to ensure that we carry this out.

5. A top priority for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking is stable and affordable housing. Housing stability is an important component of strong neighborhoods. Excluding the rent control ban, what ideas do you have to

improve the affordable housing stock in Chicago, including transitional and long-term housing options?

I have a detailed plan that involves creating grants through churches, community development corporations (CDCs) and other neighborhood groups utilizing city owned buildings and vacant properties to build affordable housing throughout Chicago. This would be combined with a program for teaching trade skills so that we can, simultaneously, create jobs, small business growth, mentorship programs, community reinvestment and community pride – all with the same program.

6. Chicago has large number of underserved neighborhoods which lack housing stability, access to supportive services and economic investment from the city. What are your specific plans to invest in these neighborhoods to balance these inequalities?

I have often stated in public that if we can afford to put \$8.5 billion into expanding the gates for the airlines at O'Hare Airport, we certainly can find \$1-2 billion to reinvest in our neighborhoods. Instead of making a priority to build a Riverwalk from downtown to Chinatown, let's make affordable housing and economic investment, on a parity basis, in all 77 communities that makeup Chicago. It is just unfair to take the tax dollars from those neighborhoods and strip them of all their resources that are rightfully theirs and not replace them.

7. Since 1982, the state of Illinois began funding for sexual assault services. In more recent years, Cook County also began to provide funding for these services. The City of Chicago has never provided funding for sexual assault services. Do you support allocating funding to sexual assault service providers? If so, how would you generate that funding?

My plan is to reestablish and expand the mental health clinics that were abruptly closed by the current mayor. In addition to this, we should re-establish basic medical services in clinics in the City of Chicago. These two medical services should be combined in facilities that would be able to focus on the 360-degree support for victims of sexual crimes. Both physical and psychological help will be needed in these situations. My plan is designed to work compassionately in these situations.

8. Between January 1, 2018 and November 30, 2018 Chicago has experienced 34 homicides related to domestic violence. Analysis of past data show that domestic violence homicides generally account for ten percent of the overall homicide rate. In 2018, a large number of domestic violence related homicides were committed with a firearm. What steps will your office take, if any, to address domestic violence related gun violence? How will you address the removal of FOID cards from domestic violence offenders?

We must enforce the laws we have on the books and create databases that will alert us when a perpetrator of domestic violence is also a concealed carry holder. There are other items that need to be in this database including all up-to-the-minute changes in mental status of anyone who is in legal possession of a firearm. Instead of creating gang data bases in which the data is highly incorrect, we should focus on databases that will allow us to track the source of these violent situations.