



Chicago Mayor 2019 Election Guide

**Candidate:
La Shawn K. Ford**

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 six organizations listed above.

Questions

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

1. Do you support an elected school board?

I do. My whole campaign is about emphasizing not only more democracy, transparency, accountability, and independence of decision-making away from the mayor's office, but a more participatory way of running this city, driven more by community stakeholders throughout the city. An elected school board is naturally a part of this effort.

2. Do you support eliminating the rent control ban?

Yes, I believe we need to eliminate the rent control ban. And yet what we do going forward is equally important. We do need to institute rent control, but rent control that is judicious and strategic and beneficial to all stakeholders.

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?

Absolutely not. Such practices are absolutely unacceptable before or after learning of claims of harassment or discrimination of any kind. We need transparency, accountability, and to abide by civil and human rights for all people.

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

Yes.

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 would.

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.

I am in total agreement that this is an epidemic, hidden too long, and that it requires a comprehensive public health and safety response, by the city and within our communities and families. I will increase staffing in these departments, and we also need a broader approach that includes prevention and intervention everywhere in the city. We need extensive dialogue throughout our city that challenges any norms that verbal or physical abuse is acceptable. We need to challenge norms that suggest intimate partners violence does not occur among LGBT-Q couples. We need men in every family in Chicago to become full allies and make it clear everywhere, through non-violent and promotive strategies, that violence against women, and violence against anyone is unacceptable. This is not simply an issue of several city departments. There is not a single department in the city that doesn't have a role to play in getting across that domestic violence is unacceptable. I will create an inter-departmental task force, represented with liaisons at the top of every city department that will work on media, in the schools, on policies, and other areas to reduce domestic violence everywhere in the city.

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 am and would continue to be the strongest advocate against gender-based violence.

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?

Given the extensive research on the reluctance of survivors to distrust law enforcement it is almost inconceivable that these issues have not been addressed within the CPD. Mishandled investigations without accountability are unacceptable. Any police officer interactions that create even the slightest hint of distrust in those who have been abused or threatened is unacceptable. I would be the strongest proponent of reform. Again my focus would be on promoting norms that would make every family member a cautious but fierce non-violent allies against domestic violence.

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?

Too often media coverage arises and the momentum to address these failures fades. Again, prevention against abuse must be at the forefront of conversations in every city department. There is such extensive knowledge in the social science and helping profession literatures about how our settings and communities can avoid blaming survivors, ensure their voices are heard while their privacy is protected. I will not pretend I know now student-survivors are able to stay in school, stay safe, and succeed academically. But I will be driven by the recommendations provided by this group of organizations and other anti-violence advocates to ensure we do whatever we can.

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?

We need more affordable housing, more rent control and more homeownership. If TIFs and similar investment models had been used as they were intended we could have had more affordable housing, stronger schools, and more mental health supports for Chicagoans. What is clear is that the TIF mechanism has too long been used outside its original intention, which was to revitalize neighborhoods, bring in local businesses, and bring back jobs. Instead we see in some cases 50% of TIF funds being used in the loop and the immediately surrounding area. This tax money could put more directly into housing, schools, and services. We need more mandates for affordable housing, more innovative models, more of a use of scientific data showing how much Housing First can transform the lives of those who are the most vulnerable in our city.

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?

Every one of my efforts, my economic plan for the city, my heart and attention, goes out to investment to every city border. We need to avoid and reverse displacement of the poor and people of color, we need fully funded schools, we need new forms of employment, and health care access. The TIF example above, Lincoln Yards, and so many other examples, show that we have only been willing to make gentrified areas more gentrified. No other

candidate has the legislative history, the action, and the commitment to truly engage in a poor people's campaign in the city of Chicago.

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?

I am in full support of additional support services for agencies and/or providers who work with those who have experienced sexual assault. And again, we need to invest in families, and particularly men, in committing to stand up against violence against women.

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?

Illinois law demands the removal of FOID cards from anyone who has a domestic violence conviction. As a State Rep. do inform me if there are loopholes that we can close. I will not be surprised if they exist and we can close them.