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My Endorsements for the March 19, 2024 Democratic Primary

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My Endorsements for the March 19, 2024 Democratic Primary

Early Voting Begins Tomorrow in the Wards; Important Races for States Attorney and Board of Review

MICHELE SMITH

MAR 6



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This year's election is important for the future of our country and county. The ballot is long, but the races are very important. You are allowed to print this out and bring it with you to the polling place.

My endorsements are arranged by ballot number. Since our Ward contains several Congressional districts and several State Representative districts, your ballot will not list all these races.

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My Democratic Primary Endorsements

President of the United States

(1) Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

On the ballot, you will vote for a candidate and a slate of Democratic delegates for each candidate.

United States Senator

(21) Richard J. Durbin

U.S. Representative, 5th District

(32) Mike Quigley

U.S. Representative, 7th District

(12) Danny Davis

Danny Davis has served our district with honor for many years. As generations change, we should have a mixture of strong experience and newcomers to continuously energize our U.S. Congress. While I might have supported a new person in this race, I do not support any of the people running against Rep. Davis. Melissa Conyears-Ervin has had ethical issues, and I am frankly uncomfortable with married couples (her husband is an Alderman) both serving in public office simultaneously. Ms. Kina Collins is a progressive choice, but I admit I do not share her views on the conflict in the Middle East. Congressman Davis has had a worthy career and enjoys the

support of leading individuals in his district.

Delegate to the National Nominating Convention , **5th Congressional District**

Vote for all 8 delegates, all of whom are pledged to President Biden:

- (21) Marcelino Garcia**
- (22) Sara Feigenholtz**
- (23) Timmy Knudsen**
- (24) Margaret Croke**
- (25) Brian J. McPartlin**
- (26) Aurora Austriaco**
- (27) Eli Moog**
- (28) Valerie Alexander**

Delegate to the National Nominating Convention, **7th Congressional District**

Vote for all 8 delegates, all of whom are pledged to President Biden

- (21) LaShawn K. Ford**
- (22) Anna Valencia**
- (23) Kam Buckner**
- (24) Emma M. Mitts**
- (25) Walter Burnett Jr.**
- (26) Patricia Dowell**
- (27) Rory Hoskins**
- (28) Nicole T. Lee**

Illinois State Senator, **5th District**

- (61) Lakesia Collins**

Illinois House of Representative

- (71) 9th District - Yolanda Morris**
- (71) 10th District - Jawaharial Williams**
- (71) 11th District - Ann M. Williams**
- (71) 12th District - Margaret Croke**
- (71) 26th District - Kam Buckner**

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD)(Vote for three)

- (81) Sharon Waller**

(82) Kari K. Steele

(83) Marcelino Garcia

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD)

(85) Precious Brady-Davis

County Clerk of Cook County

(92) Mariyana T. Spryopoulos

This job is important to the administration of justice. Chicago remains one of the few cities in the country in which the public is unable to easily search judicial records for criminal cases. This makes it very difficult for citizens to participate as court advocates, and it makes it almost impossible to get accurate statistics about the outcomes of all criminal cases in the County.

While the process to get these records into a computer system has begun, I trust Mariyana Spryopoulos to get the job done.

State's Attorney

(94) Eileen O'Neill Burke

It is time for a change at the Cook County State's Attorney. Eileen O'Neill Burke is a distinguished judge who stepped down to run for this office. She is a former State's Attorney who is committed to restaffing the depleted and discouraged office, and training prosecutors and police to make effective cases. She will seek even-handed justice on behalf of victims. To hear an interview with Judge O'Neill Burke, listen [here](#). To hear the debate between Judge O'Neill Burke and challenger Clayton Harris, click [here](#).

Commissioner, Board of Review, 3rd District

(111) Larecia Tucker

Please tell your friends in Streeterville and south to vote for Larecia Tucker for Board of Review. Current long-time Commissioner Larry Rogers has benefited from large contributions directly from real estate attorneys who appear before him to see assessment reductions, according to the [Chicago Tribune](#). ("County property tax official running for sixth term rakes in cash from appeals industry".)

This office directly affects our own property taxes, as unwarranted reductions

result in higher taxes for everyone else. I've been a strong supporter of Assessor Fritz Kaegi as he strives to make property taxes as fair and transparent as possible. Larecia Tucker pledges to ban contributions from real estate attorneys who practice before the Board of Review. I strongly endorse her, and hope you will vote for her.

Judicial Candidates

Judge of the Supreme Court

(121) Joy Virginia Cunningham

I have followed Judge Cunningham's career for some time and have the utmost respect for her abilities.

Judges of the Appellate Court

(131) Mary Lane Mikva

One of our finest jurists.

(132) Cynthia Y. Cobbs

Rated well qualified. Her opponent is rated not qualified by several of the bar associations.

(134) Celia Louise Gamrath

A very well-qualified jurist.

(136) Carl Anthony Walker

Circuit Court Judges

(141) Pablo F. deCastro

(143) Corinne C. Heggie

(144) Sarah Johnson

(145) Deidre M. Dyer

(146) Arlene Y. Coleman-Romeo

(147) Neil Cohen

Judge Cohen's opponent on the ballot did not participate in the bar association reviews, so she should not receive our vote

(150) Edward Joseph Underhill

Judge Underhill has received good reviews since he was appointed to the court in 2023 and is a very experienced lawyer.

(151) Debjani "Deb" Desai

Two well-qualified candidates are on the ballot

(153) Jennifer Patricia Callahan

(154) James S. Murphy-Aguilu

(156) Chloe Georgianna Pederson

8th Sub-Circuit Judicial Vacancies

(161) Loveleen Ahuja

Judge, 20th Subcircuit (Vacancy of Budzinski)

Vote for One

(164) Nadine Jean Wichern

One of the candidates, John Poulos, did not participate in judicial evaluations and should not be supported.

Ward Committeeperson

171 Lucy Moog

Referendum Question

"Bring Chicago Home"

This referendum question, which seeks to modify the real estate transfer tax (the tax imposed whenever a property is sold), has been put on hold while the Illinois courts determine the legality of the question on the ballot.

I'm sure many wonder why this item is on the ballot. Illinois law mandates that an increase in the transfer tax can only be passed via a referendum. This keeps decision-making in the hands of the public. Please vote on the question anyway. If the referendum question is ruled proper, then the outcome of the vote will likely be valid. If it is not upheld our votes will still inform the future public discussion.

The proposal would slightly reduce the transfer tax for sales under \$1 million to 0.6%, down from the current rate of 0.75%. It would hike the rate from .75% to 2% for the portion of any sale amount between \$1 million and \$1.5 million and would increase the rate to 3% for the portion of sale amounts over \$1.5 million. There is no doubt that transfer taxes would rise dramatically for properties over \$1,500,000. (Here is a [calculator](#)).

This tax is proposed as a measure to address the overall housing shortage in Chicago. Without going on a long policy discussion, here are the factors I look at:

- Part of the reason for the success of our ward was the building of affordable housing in the 1960s and 70s, allowing young people (like me) to live here. [444 W. Fullerton](#) (where I lived in 1979) and the townhomes in Walpole Point are just a few of the developments supported by federal funds and mortgage insurance in those days. Those programs lasted 30 years and afterwards many of those developments were converted to condos, leading to less such housing citywide. Plus, [studies show](#) that Chicago has lost significant numbers of “naturally occurring” rental affordable housing, often 2-4 flats, across the city to gentrification or to slum clearance.
- Today, states and cities nationwide have had to take a much larger role in helping housing because:
 - The federal programs have been eliminated, narrowed or changed over the years, resulting in a smaller federal commitment to affordable housing. Same thing for programs to help mentally challenged persons, also adding to homelessness.
 - [“Over the last fifty years, tax rates for the wealthiest Americans have declined by 40 percent.”](#) (The highest marginal rate was 70% in 1982. See tax rates see [here](#).) This has also decreased funds for housing nationwide, especially in cities, which are disfavored by Congress.
 - Meanwhile, rising prices and stagnant wages have made housing more expensive for lower and middle income people.

This tax is therefore an indirect way of making taxes a bit more progressive, freeing up funds for a much-needed program by keeping it “lock-boxed” for housing. (Today, our gas tax funds are lock-boxed for transportation).

The opposing argument is that commercial development would be hurt by this transfer tax, because the top rates are higher than Chicago’s peers.

According to the [Better Government Association](#), Los Angeles passed a tougher measure (being litigated in court now), and similar taxes have been passed in New York City (Chicago’s would be very similar to NYC’s), Washington State, Washington, D.C., Hawaii, Connecticut, and Vermont. Base rates in all those cases are higher than Chicago’s today. Texas has no real estate transfer tax, and Florida’s is .7%, similar to our base rate today.

I'm voting yes, even though I appreciate the argument. Washington is not going to bail our city out on housing and these projects take time to come to fruition. If we don't spend money on affordable housing, our city will hollow out, like Detroit. Having dedicated funds in Chicago will make it possible to leverage whatever federal dollars come our way to build or finance some of the housing we need for average citizens that private enterprise cannot do alone.

VOTING IN PROGRESS in the Wards

Vote at these most convenient locations:

Lincoln Park Library
1150 W. Fullerton

Near North Library
[310 W Division](#)

NEW LOOP SUPER SITE at Clark & Lake - [191 N Clark](#)

You can see a full list of early voting sites [here](#).

HOURS

- Weekdays: 9:00am - 6:00pm
- Saturday: 9:00am - 5:00pm
- Sunday: 10:00am - 4:00pm
- Election Day: 6:00am - 7:00pm (March 19)

You can register to vote and vote on the same day. Any voter who needs to register for the first time or file an address update or a name change must show two forms of ID, one of which shows the voter's current address.

Please vote.

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