

NATIONAL BLACK AGENDA CONSORTIUM - CHICAGO

**2016 COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Part I: Instructions and Candidate Details

DATE: 2/8/16

DISTRICT: Cook County

PARTY: Democratic

NAME: Kim Foxx

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Brian Sleet

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 21,000

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES REQUIRED: 5000

Candidate Details

A) Elective or appointive, public or party, offices previously held.

N/A

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

N/A

C) What is your primary occupation?

Attorney

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years.

Member, Board of Trustees, Adler University August 2015 – Present

Member, Board of Directors, Free Spirit Media March 2009 – Present

President, Board of Directors, Planned Parenthood of Illinois, July 2014 – August 2015

Member, Board of Directors, Get In Chicago, August 2014 – August 2015

Member, Board of Directors, Leadership Greater Chicago, Leadership Fellows Association, August 2009 – July 2015

President, Board of Directors, Free Spirit Media, December 2012 – December 2014

E) What experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

My 12 years as a prosecutor, combined with my experience as a public guardian and as chief of staff to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, will be most helpful.

F) Please list all endorsements you have received.

U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis, Judge Abner Mikva, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Former Cook County Board President Bobbi Steele, Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen Yarbrough (Anita Alvarez's former campaign co-chair), Chicago City Treasurer Kurt Summers, Cook County Commissioner and former mayoral candidate Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Board of Review Commissioner Larry Rogers, AFSCME Council 31, SEIU Illinois Council, SEIU Local 73, SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana, SEIU Local 1, Chicago NOW, Personal PAC, MoveOn, Democracy for America, Citizen Action IL, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, IVI-IPO, The Reclaim Campaign, the Democratic Party of Oak Park, the Democratic Party of Evanston, Northfield Township Democrats, New Trier Township Democrats, 1st Ward First, United Neighbors of the 35th Ward, the 47th Ward Democratic Organization, Grassroots Illinois Action, Ald. Pat Dowell (3), Ald. Leslie Hairston (5), Black Caucus Chair Ald. Roderick T. Sawyer (6), Ald. Greg Mitchell (7), Ald. Michelle Harris (8), Ald. David Moore (17), Committeewoman Latasha Thomas (17), Ald. Willie Cochran (20), Ald. Howard Brookins (21), Ald. Michael Scott, Jr. (24), Ald. Walter Burnett (27), Ald. Jason Ervin (28), Ald. Chris Taliaferro (29), Ald. Carrie Austin (34), Ald. Emma Mitts (37), 48th Ward Committeewoman Carol Ronen, Ald. Joe Moore (49), Northfield Democratic Committeeman Mike Kreloff, New Trier Democratic Committeemen Dean Maragos, State Sen. Heather Steans (D-7th), State Sen. Kwame Raoul (D-13th), State Sen. Jacqueline Collins (D-16th), State Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-40th), State Rep. Emanuel Chris Welch (D-7th), State Rep. Art Turner, Jr. (D-9th), State Rep. Ann Williams (D-11th), State Rep. Laura Fine (D-17th), State Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-18th), Former State Rep. Julie Hamos (D-18th), State Rep. Rob Martwick (D-19th), State Rep. Christian Mitchell (D-26th), State Rep. Monique Davis (D-27th), State Rep. Thaddeus Jones (D-29th), State Rep. Will Guzzardi (D-39th), State Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D-57th), State Rep. Camille Lilly (D-78th), State Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-92nd), former U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, Cook County Commissioner Jerry "Iceman" Butler (3), Cook County Commissioner Deborah Sims (5), State Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-3rd), State Sen. Kim Lightford (D-4th), State Sen. Daniel Biss (D-9th), State Sen. Donne Trotter (D-17th), State Rep. Marcus Evans (D-33rd), State Rep. Al Riley (D-38th), Board of Review Commissioner Larry Rogers, Jr., MWRD Commissioners Tim Bradford, Barbara McGowan, Debra Shore and Kari Steele, Broadview Mayor Sherman Jones, Hillside Mayor Joe Tamburino, Fr. Maywood Mayor Henderson Yarbrough, Fr. Maywood Mayor Don Williams, Proviso Township Trustee Clarence Thomas, Proviso Township Clerk Anthony Williams, Maywood Trustees Isaiah Brandon, Antoinette "Toni" Dorris, Ron Rivers and Mike Rogers, Fr. Maywood Trustee Gary Woll, Maywood School Board Members Kasharii Parker, Regina Rivers and Gwaine Dianne Williams, and Maywood Park District President Lincoln Smith, Maywood Park District Board Member Arnetta Burnside, Thornton Township Committeeman Frank Zuccarelli, Burnham Mayor

Robert Polk, Lansing Mayor Norman Abbott, South Holland Mayor Don De Graff, Riverdale Mayor Lawrence Jackson, Markham Mayor David Webb, Jr., Hazel Crest Mayor Vernard Alsberry, Jr., Homewood Mayor Richard Hofeld, Harvey Aldermen Christopher J. Clark, Shirley Drewenski and Joseph Whittington, Jr., Dolton Trustees Stanley "Stan" Brown, Robert Hunt and Tiffany Henyard, Dixmoor Trustee Mike Smith, Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl and Evanston Aldermen Peter Braithwaite and Brian Miller.

G) What is your campaign budget and how much have you raised to date?

We hope to raise at least \$1.2 million-\$1.5 million. To date, we have raised about \$900,000.

H) Please concisely state what goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally?

1. Ensuring that all criminals are treated by the same standard of justice; this includes reviewing the backlog of police misconduct cases.
2. Restoring the People's faith in the office; this includes reviewing the backlog of wrongful conviction cases.
3. Eliminating the school to prison pipeline.
4. Directing all ASAs to always do the right thing in every case.
5. Developing programs with Juvenile Court and the Cook County Jail to support children of incarcerated parents. For families of limited economic means, in particular Black and Latino families, options for supporting children with imprisoned parents can be scarce. Research estimates that African American children, poor children, and children of parents without as much access to education are disproportionately represented among the total population of children of incarcerated parents. When our jail is so overcrowded, with housing more than double the capacity it was built for, and when 86% of those imprisoned there are minorities, something must be done to address the vulnerability of their children and families which makes them more at-risk for adverse childhood experiences, affecting children with incarcerated parents.

Part II: Issue Questionnaire

Yes/No Questions

1. Will you commit to changing current policy(les) to increase transparency in the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney by periodically releasing statistical data to the public (i.e. cases / case status / case dispositions/ demographics, etc.)?

Yes

2 Do you support mandatory minimum sentencing?

I prefer presumptive sentencing, which sets a sentencing baseline but allows for more judicial discretion, and still creates space for harsher sentencing for felons with gun offenses.

3 Would you support legislation prohibiting racial profiling in law enforcement?

Yes

Additional Explanation for Yes/No Responses:

Essay Questions

4. Explain the role and responsibilities of the Cook County State's Attorney office.

The State's Attorney's role is to provide justice for all Cook County residents; she is the attorney for the community. The office is not defined merely by the high-profile cases it handles, but rather the everyday ones, with names we don't recognize. While the incumbent has allowed her office to be influenced by the well-connected, I would prioritize restoring trust between the office and the community by pushing for a more fair system of justice.

The main responsibility of the Cook County State's Attorney is to set policy in our justice system. This means using discretion when deciding which cases to prosecute. We need to reform our broken system to shutter the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure everyone has equal opportunity.

5. Do you believe the term "Mass Incarceration" is an apt descriptor for African Americans and Latino's in the criminal justice system? If yes, how do you view the role of the State's Attorney in addressing Mass Incarceration? If no, explain why?

Yes, we must end the racially biased and unjust practice of mass incarceration for non-violent drug offenders, instead diverting people to drug treatment, mental health, and job training opportunities. As State's Attorney, I will push for common sense policies that will make our system more fair for people of color. For example, Chicago has four times the number of stop and frisk cases as New York City, which disproportionately affect communities of color. A large majority of Cook County Jail detainees are people of color. Our broken system disproportionately criminalizes people of color, and I will work to reverse this problem by comprehensively engaging all aspects of our justice system instead of merely focusing on securing convictions in every low-level case.

6 The Chicago police department has a long-held reputation for abusive and discriminatory behavior, most recently being featured on 60 Minutes in 2012 as the "False Confession Capital." In light of this history and the current protests in Chicago, do you believe the CPD is in need of reform? Why or why not?

To fix our broken justice system, and to begin to rebuild public trust in it, we must acknowledge the fact that the Cook County State's Attorney's office relies heavily on police officers as witnesses and critical sources of information for most of the cases it prosecutes. An inherent conflict exists whenever the state's attorney has to prosecute a police-involved shooting. That is why I have called for an independent prosecutor to investigate police shootings, the only candidate in the race to do so. We also must recognize that all allegations of police brutality, not just the ones caught on camera, matter to our communities. As State's Attorney, I will hold police accountable for their actions.

7. What is the biggest justice issue facing citizens of Cook County?

The citizens of Cook County do not trust the State's Attorney's office. This lack of trust inhibits the office's ability to serve the people it supposedly represents. As State's Attorney, I would take concrete steps to increase transparency and rebuild that trust.

8. Explain your approach to the criminal justice system and why Black / Brown people should support you.

My approach to the criminal justice system is informed by my life experience and my time as a prosecutor. Growing up in Cabrini Green, I saw firsthand how crime, violence, and poverty impacted our communities. As Cook County's first female African-American State's Attorney, I will bring a viewpoint that has been sorely lacking from our criminal justice system. We need to look at the policies that hurt and criminalize communities of color, like mandatory minimums for drug crimes, and push to reverse them. We need to effectively engage community groups to help cut down on the number of low-level, non-violent offenders who enter our system and never escape it.

I have experience making these plans a reality. As County Board President Preckwinkle's chief of staff, I was the lead architect of the criminal justice reform agenda--addressing racial disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Those efforts resulted in a significant drop in the Cook County jail population while maintaining public safety. From the State's Attorney's office, I will continue to dismantle our system of unjust mass incarceration that victimize people of color the most.

9. Many African Americans in Chicago have no confidence in the criminal justice system. What do you think needs to happen for African Americans to believe that "justice" can be found in the criminal justice system?

This is a very personal issue for me, and I, more than any other candidate in this race, understand the mistrust that exists between African-Americans and the criminal justice system. We can address this lack of confidence in three ways. First, we must hold police accountable for their actions. This means appointing an independent prosecutor to handle cases of police shootings. Second, we need to move towards a more comprehensive view of justice and prosecution.

This means prioritizing violent crime over low-level offenses that leave Cook County Jail overflowing with marginalized people. Finally, we must make diversity a priority in the State's Attorney's office. The office should look like the communities it represents, and under the incumbent, that has definitely not been the case.

African-Americans need to see the justice system working on their behalf; under the incumbent, it has not. Listening to the needs of communities of color and working to implement fair policies that empower them will go a long way in rebuilding the trust the incumbent has shattered.

10. What do you think are the leading factors that reduce recidivism and does the State's Attorney office have a responsibility to reduce recidivism?

The State's Attorney does have a responsibility to reduce recidivism and can do so by pushing for smarter policies in the way individuals are prosecuted and held. The key driver of recidivism is the inability to become a productive member of society and be employed; therefore our policies must preserve opportunity. For example, last year, I pushed for important reforms to the way juveniles are tried in Cook County, to reduce the number of juveniles automatically transferred to adult court and encourage courts to keep children under 13 out of the criminal justice system by placing them with community service providers instead of detention centers. These common sense changes help juvenile offenders stay out of the system and get on the right track.

11. Are the domestic violence laws in Cook County sufficient or do they need to be strengthened?

It is difficult to determine the sufficiency of the laws on domestic violence because the State's Attorney has failed to make improvements to the Domestic Violence Division. As State's Attorney, I will rely on my experience as a survivor of sexual abuse and homelessness and years in the Cook County Public Guardian's office to create a system that is compassionate to victims of domestic violence and that cracks down on abusers. Today, too often victims are left struggling in single-income homes with kids to raise and no outside support system. Frequently, the victim allows the offender back into the home because she is dependent on him to survive and raise a family.

12. Why do you believe 15 police officers across the U.S. were charged with murder last year and why, if you agree, does Chicago have a long history of not seeking murder indictments against the police?

I believe that the officers charged last year were charged because they must be held accountable for their actions while in uniform as much as while they're off-duty. The uniform is seen by some as a get out of jail free card.

Chicago has a long history of not seeking these charges for police officers, in part because, for too long, the top prosecutor has succumbed to political pressure instead of doing the right thing.

I have the profound understanding that the CCSA cannot be responsible for objectively reviewing police shooting cases involving CPD due to the inherent conflict that exists from working with them to bring cases against offenders.

13. Violent crime is seen by many as the most pressing issues in Chicago. What do you believe is the role of State's Attorney office, if any, in addressing violent crime and keeping our streets safe?

Our next State's Attorney needs to take a comprehensive approach to addressing violent crime. With 12 years of experience as a prosecutor, I am committed to keeping our neighborhoods safe by prosecuting violent offenders. But the incumbent clogged our system with cases against non-violent offenders, impeding our ability to go after the most dangerous criminals. As State's Attorney, I will work with our mental health system and community groups to cut the rate of prosecution of low-level, non-violent offenders and re-focus my efforts on prosecuting the most dangerous.

Next, there is a real responsibility to cut off the flow of illegal guns to our streets. I will have a focus on straw purchasers and trafficked guns. Chicago recovers more guns each year than any other major city, and we have a larger problem with gun violence. We have to cut the weapons off at the source.

14. Explain the relationship and interaction of the Cook County State's Attorney office to municipal mayoral offices, specifically the Office of the Mayor of Chicago. Or what the relationship should be.

The CCSAO has to work, sometimes as a partner, with all mayoral offices in Cook County. This relationship is important to work on comprehensive and holistic approaches to reducing violent crime, gang activity, and making communities safer. This would also happen with the City of Chicago's Mayor due to the fact that it's integral to work with the Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Police Department to make communities safer.

15. Do you support incarcerating attorneys for prosecutorial malpractice for withholding evidence in order to gain a conviction? Please explain.

I support prosecuting anyone who has committed a crime, been investigated, and should be prosecuted if there's a good fair basis to bring charges, regardless of their affiliations. While there is an inherent conflict and numerous reasons why the CCSAO cannot prosecute its own ASAs, I would refer cases to the Attorney General's office when appropriate. In order to promote the highest integrity and standards in the office, ASAs who don't meet those standards must be held accountable so that the People can have faith in the system.