



Vote!

Important deadlines for the 2010 Primary Election

- Jan. 5 Last day to register to vote
- Jan. 6 First day of grace period registration and voting
- Jan. 11 First day of early voting
- Jan. 26 Last day of grace period registration and voting
- Jan. 28 Last day of early voting
- Jan. 28 Last day military and overseas voters may request a ballot
- Jan. 29 In-person absentee voting begins at Clerk's downtown Chicago office only
- Feb. 1 Last day mail-in absentee ballots can be postmarked for acceptance by the Clerk's office

Early Voting

Early Voting Period for February 2, 2010 Primary Election:

January 11-28, 2010

Since 2006, voters in Illinois have been able to vote up to 22 days prior to Election Day. Suburban Cook County voters have a choice of dozens of locations around suburban Cook as well as in downtown Chicago.

Remember to bring a government-issued photo ID such as a passport, driver's license, or military ID. All Early Voting is conducted on touch screens.

Voters do not need to provide a reason why they cannot make it to the polls on Election Day.

**Make Your
Vote Count
February 2**

Offices to be elected

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| US Senator | US Representatives |
| Governor | Lieutenant Governor |
| Attorney General | Secretary of State |
| State Comptroller | State Treasurer |
| State Senators (some) | State Representatives |
| Cook County Board President | Cook County Commissioners |
| Cook County Assessor | Cook County Clerk |
| Cook County Treasurer | Cook County Sheriff |
| Cook County Board of Review Commissioners (1st district) | Circuit Court Judges |
| Appellate Court Judges | Township Committeemen |
| MWRD Commissioners (some) | |
| Regional Superintendent of Schools | |

Cook County Offices up for Election

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Earlean Collins, 1st District | Bridget Gainer, 10th District |
| Robert B. Steele, 2nd District | John Daley, 11th District |
| William Beavers, 3rd District | Forrest Claypool, 12th District |
| Jerry Butler, 4th District | Larry Suffredin, 13th District |
| Deborah Sims, 5th District | Gregg Goslin, 14th District |
| Joan Patricia Murphy, 6th District | Timothy Schneider, 15th District |
| Joseph Mario Moreno, 7th District | Tony Peraica, 16th District |
| Edwin Reyes, 8th District | Liz Gorman, 17th District |
| Peter Silvestri, 9th District | |

BOARD OF REVIEW:

- Brendan Houlihan, 1st District

COUNTYWIDE ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jim Houlihan, Assessor | Maria Pappas, Treasurer |
| David Orr, Clerk | Tom Dart, Sheriff |
| Todd Stroger, President | |

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Barbara McGowan | Mariyana Spyropolous |
|-----------------|----------------------|

President of the Cook County Board

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Dorothy Brown
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Twitter: http://twitter.com/DBforCCPres



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? As President, I will follow a reform agenda for the citizens of Cook County. The major issues are: (1) to put health care finances in order; (2) to reform the justice administration system, and (3) to improve the taxpayer's return on investment by eliminating wasteful spending and reforming the budgetary process.

Cook County must put its healthcare finances in order. I will reform the revenue cycle by implementing a four-point plan of fiscal responsibility. I will ensure that patients with an ability to pay are charged for the services they use; revamp the collections process to collect bad debts more quickly; prevent insurers for underpaying for services and leverage more favorable coverage; and make hospital business processes more efficient with innovative information technology solutions.

Cook County must reform the administration of the justice system, especially the Juvenile Justice system. There is a study performed by American University as to how to reduce jail overcrowding and make the wheels of justice flow smoother. I would work with the Public Safety agencies to properly implement that study's, ideas Differentiated Case Management (DCM) system that enables criminal justice agencies to develop and adopt appropriate time goals and events for disposition of various categories of cases; sponsor training for judges and lawyers in case flow management; reconstitute a Pretrial Release and Service Agency to serve the criminal courts; develop a Strategic Plan for attainment of national standards for court and judicial system performance; use the Trial Courts Performance Standards and measurement system forms to monitor and report on progress towards case processing goals and other court improvement initiatives; initiate a process to develop and implement the compilation of timely, accurate, and system-relevant data on the adjudication process by the Court, the Clerk's Office, State's Attorney and Public Defender Offices and the Department of Corrections, ensuring consistent definitions.

Cook County must eliminate wasteful spending and reform the budgeting process. I will work to eliminate unnecessary vacant positions and reduce exempt-employee salaries and benefits, as appropriate; increase program consolidations and initiate joint intergovernmental purchasing, and implement other efficiency measures; lead a coordinated effort to obtain both State and Federal grants to fund the health care, criminal justice systems and other agencies as appropriate; introduce zero-based budgeting for all agencies to justify all line items each year; and increase the County's return on investment through performance-based contracting and strategic purchasing.

What will be your number one priority be, if you are elected? My number one priority will be to stabilize the county's financial position by finding new revenues without raising taxes; while also streamlining the budget. Cook County is in a fiscal and mismanagement crisis, and the citizens of Cook County have lost faith in the current President's ability to bring Cook County out of the crisis. There is a lack of transparency in the governing, therefore the commissioners and the President are constantly at odds. I am the only candidate with both the executive management experience (34 years in the business arena), and the financial background, as a CPA and MBA, needed to lead Cook County out of its financial and mismanagement crisis. My opponents are career legislators or policy makers, and would need training wheels to get up to speed with managing an office like the President of the Cook County Board.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support strategically lowering the 1 percent Cook County sales tax increase, while replacing it with non-tax revenues, and/or cost budget reductions to offset the loss in sales tax revenues.

To replace the sales tax revenue I would create a Revenue Increase Initiative Taskforce, the same as the one that I started as Clerk of the Circuit Court, and have every elected official and department head review all non-tax revenue statutes and ordinances for their areas to determine if there needs to be a change, to create new revenue. Initiatives such as fee changes, collection agencies, State of Illinois income tax refund intercepts, credit card collections, debit card collections, financial compliance units (internal collection department, etc. I would also make sure that every elected official and department head review all services being provided and make sure that fees are being charged and determine whether new services can be provided and charged for. I would use an Economic Development Roundtable to attract new businesses to Cook County; and a Cook County Small Business Administration Office to help the increase the number of small businesses in Cook County and thus expand the property tax base, and in some cases the sales tax base, and create jobs. I

will also use advertising sales to generate revenue.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? I see the utilization of zero-based budgeting as an avenue to reduce government spending and waste. It can lead to a more efficient allocation of resources because it is based on needs and benefits. The process of putting together the budget can help managers detect inflated line items; increase coordination and communication within a department and an entire agency; identify wasteful and obsolete operations; and force departments to align their goals to the overall mission of the agency.

In addition, I favor the following measures to save money, improve efficiency, cut waste and prevent abuse:

A. Conducting joint purchases of health insurance for local government employees;

B. Issuing bimonthly paychecks to employees; and

C. Implementing a biometric timekeeping system to accurately track employee time.

A. Joint purchasing of health insurance for local government employees

At present, the City of Chicago has an agreement with six other local governments to purchase prescription drug coverage jointly for employees. This effort is laudable, and should be expanded to include joint purchases of health care coverage for employees in Cook County.

A 2001 study by the Civic Federation found that Chicago and the six other governments could save \$40.1 million in one year and \$222 million over five years if they pursued a joint purchasing strategy for health care insurance. I will work with other governmental agencies to implement such a strategy.

B. Issue bimonthly paychecks instead of 26 payments

At present, County employees are paid every two weeks, for a total of 26 payments a year. To save money on processing, printing and mailing costs, the County could issue paychecks twice a month, as is done in many private organizations.

C. Implement biometric, automated timekeeping system

As President, I would introduce a biometric hand reader system for employees to sign in and out for the day. Under this system, employees punch in by swiping a badge or keying a number, and then placing their hand on the device to verify they are who they say they are. This system would help reduce timekeeping abuses, and helps management monitor the amount of time that employees are truly on the clock.

Candidate name: Terrence J. O'Brien
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Tax reduction and fiscal responsibility, ethics reform, cutting waste and mismanagement.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? I am in favor of immediate FULL repeal of the regressive 1% sales tax increase. Residents of Cook County paid the highest sales tax IN THE NATION! This is a regressive tax which impacts everyone, and is especially hard on the poor and businesses. Poor people pay a much larger share of their income when they have to pay 10.25% in taxes to buy clothing, housewares and furniture. Businesses already hurting in these economic times are saddled with the same outrageous taxes when buying equipment and supplies. A business buying a \$10,000 piece of equipment paid an additional \$1025 in taxes on top of that!

A recent study from the Chaddick Institute at DePaul University shows that since this tax was raised in Cook County, sales tax revenues in Cook County have declined over 14%. Even considering the economic downturn we are currently in, this is far more than the sales tax decrease seen in any of the surrounding counties or states. The current sales tax in Cook County is **more than 2 percentage points higher** than in any of the surrounding areas. Kenosha County Wisconsin, a quick trip across the state line, has only a 5.5% sales tax. Many Cook County businesses have moved to Kenosha in the last several years and a massive industrial park there is filled with businesses formerly located here, including Calumet Meats, General Binding, Rustoleum, and even the Albany- CHICAGO Company! People are voting with their feet and going elsewhere to shop and do business.

We need to create an atmosphere in Cook County to encourage businesses to stay here. As County Board President I will create a Cabinet level office of Business Development, focusing on keeping small and medium-size businesses in the county. Small and medium businesses create the most jobs in our economy. We have to keep the businesses we have and attract new ones here, emphasizing a county government that is friendly to business development, and the vast resources in terms of people and materials that are available here in Cook County, the transportation hub of the nation. The current tax burden in Cook County is driving business away. We cannot tax our way out of government problems. We need to become more efficient in delivering government services. Keeping business in Cook County and attracting

new businesses is critical to families in our county. Good jobs are what allow people to earn money, support their families, and support government through reasonable taxes. I work with businesses throughout Cook County in my current position and I will use this experience to keep business here. It's pretty simple, everyone wants **competent, efficient and honest government that delivers good service at a reasonable cost.**

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? In this current economy, we are all facing challenging times but there is no limit on what Cook County can accomplish when you have effective leadership in place. Increasing taxes cannot be the only solution to the many problems in the Cook County budget. In this year's budget, Todd Stroger wants to spend nearly 1/2 a million dollars on a Cook County film office, when the state and city of Chicago already have one! In 1989, while serving on the Board of Commissioners of the MWRD, we instituted a self-imposed tax cap of 5%, and in 20 years since then we have yet to exceed it. Just last year, we refunded over \$56 million back to the taxpayers of Cook County.

What other local governmental agency can say they've done a return to taxpayers of this size during these tough economic times? I'm in favor of immediate rollback of the full regressive 1% sales tax increase. We can't tax our way out of Cook County government problems

As President of the Cook County Board I will root out wasteful spending and streamline government. We need to make a complete functional analysis of how Cook County operates. Right now many administrative tasks are being duplicated in agencies of county government. We need to look at combining administrative functions. I will work to merge administrative functions at the County and Forest Preserve which perform the same types of duties, such as accounting and finance. We need to have one central County Purchasing agency. We now have multiple purchasing agencies which do not allow the county to take advantage of bulk purchasing and warehousing of supplies. We need to examine outside contracts to determine if the work can be done by staff already on the payroll rather than contracted out.

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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Tax relief: I'm running for Cook County Board President because I believe government should uphold two basic principles: provide the best services and do so as effectively as possible. Right now, Cook County government is failing on both accounts. First, as Cook County Board President, I will move to repeal the rest of the Stroger sales tax increase, and work hard to decrease the overall sales tax - while also bringing down expenses by cutting wasteful spending and eliminating inefficient programs. The County provides too many critical services and opportunities for our community to be stalled by the waste, fraud and abuse of the current Cook County government.

Rebuilding the health care system: In order to create a solid foundation for a fiscally-sound County health system, I will push for the independent Board of Directors to be made permanent. This is the first step in reducing the political influence that has been detrimental to the efficiency and morale of those health care professionals who work so hard to provide quality care. I will also work to ensure that County health services are as efficient and effective as possible by striving for three basic objectives:

- Correct extensive waste and duplication in order to end the bureaucratic drain on health care services.
- Divert mismanaged resources into high-quality preventive care.
- Pursue cooperative ventures to create a network of specialists.

Another key challenge we face is that each year, residents of surrounding counties use Stroger Hospital free of charge. It is simply not fair that our residents are paying for their services. I will collaborate with other counties to ensure that those counties using our health resources pay their fair share.

Reforming Cook County's chronically overcrowded jail: As Cook County Board President, reforming the criminal justice system must be a priority. Cook County's jail is chronically overcrowded. This reality not only drains our budget, but compromises the safety of Cook County residents, as the Department of Corrections has fewer resources to devote to prosecuting and incarcerating violent criminals. I will expand programs that not only serve as alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders, but also provide treatment for addiction, educational classes and life skills training, in order to reduce recidivism and make our county safer. The benefits of this approach are three-fold: 1) easing the overcrowding of our jail; 2) facilitating re-entry and job training;

and 3) reducing repeat offenses. Specifically, I will expand the State's Attorney's Drug Abuse Program (SADAP), which provides treatment and drug education to first-time drug offenders. I will also look to expand the State's Attorney's RAP Drug School and Cook County Drug Court, which serve as pre-trial diversions of non-violent drug offenders from jail into drug treatment programs. As current demand for these services exceeds their capacity, their expansion will unplug the County's courts and free up resources that will enable the State's Attorney's office to focus on the prosecution of violent criminals.

Strengthening the Forest Preserve District: As Cook County Board President, I pledge to re-organize the District; instilling professional management and ending the patronage that has come to characterize the Forest Preserves. Specifically, we need to address the ratio between managers and front line employees (roughly 1:2) in order to devote more people to maintaining the forest preserves. I will institute a comprehensive "desk" audit of the FPDCC to determine the productivity and efficacy of all FPDCC employees. I will make public record all Shakman-exempt employees of the FPDCC and also support the recommendations of the District's court-appointed Shakman Compliance Administrators (DCA). I will work to make the District's Human Resources Department more independent and transparent; District job applications will be more accessible; regular performance evaluations will be reinstated and best practices for personal maintenance will be instituted.

The Forest Preserves are a County treasure, providing residents with a wealth of opportunities for outdoor recreation. I want to actively pursue additional educational and recreational activities to expand the opportunities for individuals - especially our youth - to experience the Forest Preserves. We must increase land acquisition efforts to forestall the rapid disappearance of open space.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? As Alderman and Committeeman, I have been committed to providing open and transparent government. I know that across the county citizens are distrustful and dissatisfied with Cook County government. Indeed, the complete lack of transparency and accountability in government actions has brought some disastrous consequences. As Cook County Board President, I will ensure openness and transparency in all County procedures.

Cook County government and its hiring process lack both transparency and accountability. I will eliminate political influence in the hiring process that has obstructed the efficiency of County government and strained the morale of County employees. I will implement an independent agency-by-agency "desk" audit to determine the productivity, cost and benefit of each employee. As President, I will make public all Shakman-exempt positions. I will ensure online postings of all proposals, in every stage in the process, for all of Cook County's business endeavors. Every citizen has the right to know about the County's business activities. We must also end the practice of having vacant positions. The present system allows for abuse whereby money is transferred to other parts of the budget without full transparency. If a position is budgeted, then that position must be filled. If not, the position should be eliminated.

As Board President, I will establish an independent anti-corruption committee, run by former prosecutors, to fight corruption in Cook County. They will be given the task of reviewing all contracts - past and present - in order to weed out abuse and fraud, potentially saving the County tens of millions of dollars. We will work closely with the State's Attorney's office and the Federal level to root out corruption once and for all.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? As Cook County Board President, I will repeal the remainder of Todd Stroger's one percent sales tax increase in conjunction with implementing responsible spending practices, eliminating wasteful programs and ensuring that the County fully captures all due income.

The sales tax stands as a considerable roadblock to progress in Cook County. The outer edges of the County have especially felt the impact, as high taxes have driven shoppers and businesses to neighboring counties. Crain's recently reported that suburban Cook County experienced the biggest drop in sales tax revenue during the second quarter relative to the six collar counties, plummeting 14.4% during the April-June period from a year ago. Lowering the sales tax will encourage spending, incentivize businesses and jobs back to Cook County and stimulate commerce countywide.

Removing the sales tax increase will force Cook County government to implement responsible spending practices, an action that the County has ignored for too long. Cook County has yet to develop and implement any long-term process to guide its operations. Due to a lack of such plans, the public is ill-served and the County continues to stumble from one fiscal crisis to the next. As Cook County Board President, I will develop and implement a formal long-term financial planning process that allows for input from the Cook County Board of Commissioners as well as members of the public. Instituting long-term financial planning will enable us to more effectively manage our

resources, prioritize our spending and identify problems before they become crises.

A genuine long-range planning effort will also allow us to consider what other types of tax relief - in addition to cutting the sales tax - may be appropriate during the next several years. Attracting new businesses to locate, and established businesses to relocate, to Cook County will likely require certain tax incentives that will allow us to compete with other states and counties seeking to lure the same jobs.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The reforms I've spelled out in my Compact for Change (<http://tonipreckwinkle.org/page/compact-for-change>) would produce hundreds of millions in savings for the County. As I've written above, a good bit of these savings will be ticketed for tax relief, and the remainder will be reinvested into improved services aimed primarily at fighting violent crime, creating new jobs, and providing better health care to our residents.

As Board President, I will make County government more efficient by creating a commission on consolidation, to spearhead a reduction in Cook County's current separately-elected offices. This will save tens of millions of dollars, improve accountability and make the delivery of services more efficient. I will work with the Illinois General Assembly to make this a reality.

Another example of where we can realize considerable savings - in addition to hiring and contracting reform, and long-term planning - is the consolidation of the Forest Preserve Police with the Sheriff's Department. By turning over responsibility for District law enforcement to the Sheriff's Office and eliminating wasteful spending, it is estimated that the County could save taxpayers up to \$8.6 million.

Additionally, implementing drug courts has proven to be an extremely cost effective alternative to incarceration. Chicago Metropolis 2020 reported that "imprisoning those convicted of non-violent drug offenses costs Illinois taxpayers an estimated

\$240 million a year." The same report found that for every \$1 spent on drug treatment, \$7 is saved on crime, prison and health related costs.

We also must reduce our reliance on outside law firms. Currently, Cook County spends roughly \$8-9 million to hire outside lawyers to defend County employees in lawsuits. While some of these cases require outside lawyers due to inherent conflicts of interest, there are many other cases - worth millions of dollars - that can be covered by the County's legal services. As laid out in the Compact for Change, I will support Commissioner Bridget Gainer's effort to implement and develop the Conflict Council, which is comprised of County attorneys who report to, yet operate separately from, the State's Attorney's office. The Conflict Council is dedicated solely to taking on lawsuits against the County in which there is a conflict between parties of the County. This is one way to ensure that the County is conducting its business more effectively and efficiently; the Conflict Council incurs only a fraction of the cost required to pay outside firms.

Incumbent, Todd H. Stroger did not return a survey.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: John Garrido III
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Our budget and tax system serves the interests of politicians over people, and public servants have an obligation to put their communities first. When proposed, Todd Stroger balanced the bloated FY 2010 budget on the backs

of taxpayers; that must end. The quality of health care is poor, and Cook County deserves more; we need to take the politics out of our health care system. Public servants must be reminded that they are servants first, requiring they put the community's interests first. Our current board president has failed in that regard, and so we must reform our ethical and legal structures to enforce more honesty.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? First, from day one I will take an immediate 10% pay cut, and trim the salaries of those in my office to reflect the same principles of public service that I must follow. Second, I will continue to push for the full rollback of the sales tax to 3%. Thereafter, I will begin to set out an action plan to see my agenda completed in the areas of health care, budgeting and taxation, the justice system, and ethical reforms.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? It must be 3%, immediately, no exceptions. Our elected officials must be forced to trim the fat and manage our government instead relying on the taxpayer as a steady stream of revenue.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? I have proposed my "Honesty and Integrity Initiative" to shrink the county's budget and improve our tax structure. I've proposed that over four years, we reduce the cost of government by eliminating 10% from county agency budgets, 20% from the President's office budget, and 50% of the highway budget. The bulk of these reductions will start at the top by consolidating and eliminating top-heavy management positions.

I've also proposed a spending cap of whichever is the lesser of a 3% year-over-year increase or CPI, implementing a taxpayer bill of rights that requires all new Cook County taxes be approved by the voters, and establishing objective baseline performance indicators that can be documented and measured. All these objectives reduce government

inefficiency because it requires that politicians focus on getting a larger value for the money they appropriate, and increases the public's scrutiny of actions we take on their behalf.

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Facebook: Roger Keats



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Corruption, corruption, high taxes, corruption, padded payrolls, corruption, anti-jobs bias/business climate, corruption, a poorly run and inefficient health care system and did I mention corruption.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Corruption and tax relief are equal.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Too high, support repeal of the 1% and am willing to look at more than that. I worked for Jack Kemp when I was a congressional staffer in Washington. I am a supply sider and believe in limited government.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Reduce padded payrolls, get more medical care patients into the clinics and out of the emergency rooms, reduce padded payrolls, negotiate with the county's unions as if you care about the folks who pay for all of this, reduce padded payrolls and compare public sector wages and benefits with comparable private sector workers.

Green Party candidates Sean Burke and Thomas Tresser did not return surveys.

Cook County Board of Commissioners

1st District - West side, Oak Park

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Chris Harris
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Citizens need to be aware of an over-sized, 'bloated', budget. 3.1 billion dollars and it needs to be broken down this is why a sales tax increase is a ridiculous notion in hard economic times. Don't ask the citizens to pony up ask the county to tighten their belt- and that includes the personal budgets of the commissioners.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? The culture of Cook County politics need to change first, I will go in with ideals that will not waiver. I want a line-by-line review of the budget and I want to see every cent accounted for and justified. Will this take time? Yes but if the public new how little the Commissioners worked in relation to their pay scale we would all be calling for a complete overhaul.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? A complete rollback of 1%. 1/2% is only commissioners making themselves look good in the wake of the upcoming election. Lest we not forget who voted for it in the first place AND who has voted to keep it intact -until there is an election 2 months away. Not good enough.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? As stated before knowing where every cent of the budget is going. What does that worker actually do that is getting 140k a year? Why do 10 of these people getting 100k a year have the same last name as Commissioner X? Patronage, nepotism- these will become obsolete under my watch.

Incumbent, Earlean Collins did not return a survey.

Democratic candidates Mary Collins, Adekunle "Ade" Onayemi and Derrick Smith did not return surveys.

Green party candidate Ronald Lawless did not return a survey.

2nd District - South side

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Frank Bass
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Land use; healthcare; lack of green space; environment; alternative energy.

I think that the issues I have mentioned are interdependent and have an important impact on the health of Cook County residents. The county must have a variety of land uses to ensure a viable, sustainable community. Adequate green space, a healthy environment and locally produced food are important to the healthcare of the people of Cook County. Locally grown and consumed agricultural products are an important part of this, to prevent the current climate of "urban deserts" where entire communities within Cook County and other urban areas lack regular access to healthy food choices. Further, green space and the preservation of local agricultural land are important to locally driven efforts to use sustainable energy and resource usage practices.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? The elimination of health disparities across the county.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support the current sales tax rate, as it is essential to the county's ability to provide critically needed healthcare services.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? I would advocate for the use of sustainable building practices and increase the amount of services offered online to maximize efficiency and shorten residents' wait times. Encourage the use of direct deposit and push for greater departmental recycling of paper waste to minimize costs.

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Twitter: twitter.com/DesireeForCook

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Lower sales tax. Collect over \$100 million in outstanding bills due the Cook County Health System, and implement strict billing and collection procedures. Merge county offices into fewer entities (like many counties throughout the USA) to eliminate hundreds of patronage jobs which should have never existed. Bulk county-wide purchasing to lower costs. Post all county revenues, expenditures and bids online to create transparency and accountability in Cook County government. Second installment property tax bill must be due September first so taxpayers have six months between property tax payments. Automatically refund overpayments to (property) taxpayers, and post undeposited refund checks online. TIF's should be included in municipalities' annual operating budgets, and a full account of TIF revenue and expenditures should be posted online.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Lower sales tax full one percent. My goal is for government to work as efficiently as the private sector, therefore improving government services and reducing taxes. Former Commissioner Mike Quigley's fine papers on "Reinventing Cook County", etc., set forth the blueprint to consolidate county offices making government more efficient and lowering taxes. It is time to implement Congressman Quigley's excellent recommendations.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I will vote for full repeal of the one percent sales tax increase. The primary excuse for Cook County Board President Stroger's push for the sales tax increase was to fund the county health system. "An independent analysis by the Civic Federation, a business-backed government budget watchdog group, concluded [only] \$46 million of \$380 million in revenue from the new tax is going to the public health system." (*Chicago Tribune* 10/20/09). Furthermore, the tax is regressive and is a very great burden on the poor.

Cook County has lost many businesses, conventions and consumers to the collar counties and neighboring states due to the high sales tax. When business is slow, stores lower their prices to attract more customers. On the contrary, Cook County's increased sales tax encourages residents to shop elsewhere; therefore Cook County loses that sales tax revenue. Lowering the sales tax would entice customers to shop in Cook County, thus increasing sales tax revenue even though the sales tax rate is lower.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The independent Health and Hospital Systems Board has already saved the county money without reducing services and should be made permanent. Hospitals should be run by professional hospital administrators, not politicians. However, the Hospital Board still has a lot more work to accomplish. For example, there is a problem with billing errors in the hospitals: a 60% error rate in coding for Medicaid, Medicare and insurance reimbursements which has resulted in the denial of payment. The general acceptable margin of error for employees is three to four percent (9/16/09 County Board meeting- League of Women Voters Cook County Blog).

The county clerk and county recorder offices should be merged like in many counties in Illinois. I support former Commissioner Quigley's recommendation to create an "Office of Tax Administration that unites the property tax functions of the Assessor, Auditor, County Clerk, Treasurer and Recorder of Deeds" set forth in his "Reinventing Cook County- Part one" (December 2003). It is more efficient, cost effective and user friendly. The current multiple offices causes second installment property tax bills to be consistently delayed, forcing municipalities to borrow money until the property tax payments are received, thus costing taxpayers avoidable interest expense. Also, property tax installments should always be due six months apart. Since this year's second installment property tax payments are due 12/1/2009, and the next first installment payments

are due approximately 90 days later on 3/1/10, homeowners will have to greatly increase their mortgage property tax escrow payments which may force them into foreclosure.

There should be no redundant services between the county and municipalities. Unincorporated areas in Cook County should become completely incorporated into local municipalities. As many services as possible should be provided at the local municipal level. For example, it is far more cost efficient for municipalities to service county roads and bridges within their borders since many of the county's streets are isolated strips of road causing much costly travel time for the county to make the repairs.

Posting all county revenues, expenditures and bids online will create transparency and accountability in Cook County government.

Furthermore, I will not have a district office since the county building is located in the 2nd District.

Incumbent Robert B. Steele did not return a survey.

Candidates Eroid Elysee and Robert Palmer did not return surveys.

Green Party Candidates

Candidate's name: Michael Smith
Email address: xchax50@yahoo.com

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Patronage.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Remap for true representation. This district covers over 20 wards and from the richest to the poorest areas.

What will is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Let current vote stand if it doesn't impact the health system.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Consolidation of programs and allow Inspector General to do job.

3rd District - South side, Hyde Park

Democratic Candidates

Candidate's name: Monica Torres-Linares
Email address: monica4commissioner@hotmail.com
Website: <http://www.monicatorreslinares.com/>
Twitter: Monica Torres-Linares



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Reducing taxes and spurring

economic development. The current rate of sales tax has Cook County residents in Chicago paying the highest sales tax rate in the country. Moreover, with the fifth highest foreclosure rate in the country, our property tax assessments must come in line with the reality of our current property values. Lastly, many areas of the 3rd district have for decades been plagued with a lack of business development and investment in our community.

I propose the following: rollback of the increase in our sales tax rate, unless the next Board President can justify, in detail, the need for this increase. Without a doubt, the current administration has not made its case for increased taxes. Support the continued use of a 7% cap on property tax increases. Actively market our property tax classifications to attract businesses to the area, spurring much-needed investment and employment in the 3rd district.

Fixing the healthcare system. Cook County's extensive service network of the Cook County Bureau of Health's hospitals, clinics, and professional staff must be run more efficiently to make the most of taxpayer dollars spent on health care. With the cost of health care increasing every year, inefficiencies, duplicated services and waste compromise our health care resources.

I will fight for the following: work with the Board to pinpoint and correct extensive waste and duplication; prevent the bureaucratic drain on health care services and divert mismanaged resources back to serving residents with high quality, preventative care; pursue health data and statistics to initiate county-wide prevention campaigns and to coordinate care of prevalent illnesses and diseases.

Reforming the criminal justice system. As a former Assistant Public Defender, I have seen firsthand how our criminal justice system is chronically overcrowded, as thousands of non-violent offenders clog our county's courts and jail. This compromises the safety of our residents, as Corrections has fewer resources to devote to prosecuting and incarcerating violent criminals.

I will: support the expansion of alternative programs to incarceration for non-violent offenders, like the Cook County's Electronic Monitoring Program, Cook County Boot Camp, and the Sheriff's Female Furlough that offer and provide drug treatment, counseling, and educational instruction. Collaborate with and support the county's judges, the State's Attorney, the Public Defender, and the Sheriff's Office to formulate smarter sentencing guidelines for non-violent offenders.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Community outreach and transparency. As a former county employee, I can attest to the inefficiency, lack of transparency and accountability in Cook County government. In particular, voters and residents in the 3rd district are often left "in the dark" as to the issues that are discussed and voted upon in our county government. Regrettably, many of our residents don't even know who represents them in the 3rd district.

I will: immediately institute monthly community meetings for the 3rd district, in a different location each month as to keep the entire district informed as to county issues. Enable the public to have greater access to online postings of both employment opportunities and business proposals for all of Cook County's hiring and business.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support the County Board's recent vote to roll back the sales tax increase by a half penny, and would further support a rollback of the full penny increase. The Board President has not made his case, specifically, that the increase is needed. The current empty threats against the full-functioning of the county health system by the current 3rd District Commissioner are without merit since only 17% of the increased revenue will go to the hospitals; indeed, the district is in need of an advocate that will fight for accountability when it levies greater taxes against us, and the current Commissioner is clearly not that advocate.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Staff is about 80 percent of the cook county budget, and Todd Stroger has added 1,100 people to the county payroll since taking office. Cutbacks will be necessary if the Board passes a rollback of the full 1% sales tax increase, which I support. That said, a line-by-line audit of the budget will be needed to determine specific cuts, and I have experience in this process as President of a statewide organization.

One area where I will be specific, however, is with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. With a \$160 million appropriation for FY2010, the voters should know what operations are necessary to keep this district afloat, and whether the mission of conservancy is actually being upheld.

More importantly, I have witnessed firsthand as a former county employee that in many departments, some (though of course not all) employees come to work and do little if any work required by their respective role. Indeed, this problem has been cited by many of the voters I have encountered, who criticize the lack of productivity of employees in the departments where they seek services, be it with the Court System, the County Hospitals, or the County Board of Elections. I am in favor of forming a volunteer task force among Board Members on accountability and productivity of county employees, and the unions must be a positive participant in this process.

Incumbent Jerry Butler did not return a survey.

Democratic candidate Ronald Oliver did not return a survey.

4th District - South side

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Elgie R. Sims, Jr.
Email address: ElgieSims2010@gmail.com
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/ElgieSims2010
Twitter: www.Twitter.com/ElgieSims2010

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The long term stability of Cook County's budget; Cook County and all governments, must get to a point where they are taking the most care of taxpayer resources in a manner that is most effective and efficient. As resources become more scarce and the need for services grow, Cook County must be able to provide services efficiently and effectively without overburdening taxpayers.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My top priority will be focusing on the stabilization of the County's budget, this includes:
i. Dealing with Cook County's structural deficit;
ii. Addressing the failure to fully fund pension obligations of County employees; and
iii. Ensuring that front line workers have the resources they need to perform their jobs effectively.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support efforts to be more proactive with Cook County resources, including getting a better handle on revenue and expenditure projections for the current and upcoming fiscal year. Those efforts to roll back the tax, past and future, should be coupled with revenue alternatives that will support County operations in the absence of the revenues provided by the tax.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Pursuant to state law, Cook County is required to provide for the health and safety of its residents. During these tough economic times and with the serious revenue challenges facing Cook County, including, the current economic crisis, years of under funding public retirement systems, and the increased cost of providing healthcare. I believe that we should be having a discussion not only of how we trim and cut government but how we grow our economy, WITHOUT placing an increased burden on taxpayers. We must be honest, reforms and cuts to programs will only go so far and oftentimes hurts those in the most need. There must be a realistic discussion about the way that all governments fund services and how additional revenues can be obtained that impose the least burden on taxpayers.

Incumbent William Beavers did not return a survey.

Democratic candidate Karen Sommerfeld did not return a survey.

Green party candidate Joseph Barton did not return a survey.

5th District - South suburbs

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Deborah Sims
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? While focusing on economic growth, we must enforce a balanced budget in Cook County that preserves services and funding, without making drastic cuts to employment and vital services such as health care.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? As a Commissioner, I firmly believe that preserving quality healthcare is a key priority. I will continue to work hard to ensure the delivery of quality healthcare, and promote public funding for healthcare programs and our hospitals. If re-elected, I will also promote economic development and enforce a responsible budget in Cook County.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I stand in support of the sales tax because it preserves healthcare for the people in Cook County - specifically people in my district who have to travel as far as Ford Heights and Stroger Hospital for service. Supporting the tax protects our hospitals and clinics, and helps to prevent cuts in jobs and services. However, I would support a

gradual roll back with some type of trigger, such as a quarter of a penny as a roll back. If the benchmark fell below a certain standard we would not take the penny.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? We must be more watchful of how we spend tax dollars, and work to stop duplication of services and consolidation.

Democratic candidate Sheila Chalmers-Currin did not return a survey.

Republican Candidates

Candidate's name: Miriam Shabo
Email address: mshabo@sbcglobal.net

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Government leadership; strategic and fiscal management including government size and taxes.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Creation of an inviting business environment to increase source of revenue source, while reducing the tax burden on constituents and maintaining service levels

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? The sales tax is too high, which has adverse effect on the County revenues. Develop business and reorganize

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Conduct a complete program audit; revamp the strategic and fiscal plans to conform to the government finance officers; association guideline; cost each program and make the department heads accountable for performance outcomes; and institute hiring according to merit.

Republican candidate James Thigpen did not return a survey.

6th District - Far south suburbs

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Joan Patricia Murphy
Email address: jpmurphy@cookcountygov.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? New revenue sources to avert a financial crisis in 2011. Preservation of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Although it is not specifically a county issue, I would like to find a new way for the State to fund education other than property tax. Education is anywhere from 60 to 80% of our property tax bill. The County has not increased its property tax rate in 13 years, yet the county is blamed for the high tax bills. Illinois ranks 19th out of the 50 states in aid to education.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Work on consolidation of some County offices, continue to support the plan to have all the IT in the County being under the Department of Technology and Automation. We are still not in the 21st century when it comes to technology.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? The rate is now one-and-a-half pennies. I did not support the roll back of 1/2 a penny. It will mean a loss of \$200,000,000.00 in 2011 to the County. To the individual that is 1/2 penny will not even be noticed. On \$10.00 the tax is five pennies, on \$25.00 the tax is 12.5 pennies and on \$100 the tax is 50 pennies.

What avenue(s) do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Again consolidation. Eighty percent of our budget is driven by employee costs, wages and benefits. Our business is service and to provide services we need people. Service is our commodity. With more automation we can perhaps cut our employees. That's where the majority of our money goes.

Democratic candidates John Fairman and Nick Valdez did not return surveys.

Republican candidates Sanda Czynikiewicz, Michael Hawkins and William Moran did not return surveys.

9th District - Northwest side, Elmwood Park

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Peter N. Silvestri
Email address: cookcty9@aol.com
Website address: www.petersilvestri.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? (Not in order of importance)

1. Reform hiring practices.
2. Reorganization of bureaucracy to streamline operations and save costs.
3. Improve revenue collections at health system.
4. Abolish duplicative services done at state and municipal governments.
5. Improve operations at jail and end various federal court orders.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Reform and reorganization of the bureaus and agencies to streamline, improve operations and save costs.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Opposed from the beginning. Support repeal and efforts to override vetoes of the tax rollback.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? See answers above.

Democratic candidate Cary Capperelli did not return a survey.

10th District - Far eastside

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Kevin W. Graham
Email address: kgraham@ChicagoFOP.org

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? High sales tax. Disarray in our forest preserves.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? To re-establish faith and trust in county government and ensure that resources, including tax dollars, are not squandered.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Cook County's sales tax rate must be reduced. We are driving business out of the county.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The county does not currently take full advantage of bulk buying, especially of large equipment and fleet purchases.

Incumbent Bridget Gainer did not return a survey.

12th District - Loop

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: John A. Fritchey
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Campaign contact: Lexi Fiedler (lexi@fritchey.com)
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What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Cook County has a plethora of issues that need to be addressed, ranging from skyrocketing property taxes to patronage hires and the lack of transparency. In these trying economic times, people cannot afford to have a county government that is being run inefficiently and ineffectively. We need to make sure that taxpayers are getting responsible and effective government for their dollars. Serving on the County Board will provide an opportunity to continue my past work and bring it closer to home. Whether it is property tax reform, increased transparency and accountability, or environmental initiatives, there will be no shortage of important issues to take on.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? It is necessary that we continue our efforts to make Cook County government more transparent and accountable. People are justifiably upset with their county government, and see their tax dollars not just being spent ineffectively, but also paying for patronage and corruption. As Cook County families look for ways to balance their household budgets and do more with less during this recession, government must do the same. In my career as a state legislator, I have prided myself on my reform record, having authored, sponsored, and passed countless pieces of substantive ethics and reform legislation ranging from a ban on pay-to-play politics, to changing our procurement system, to strengthening public access to government information through the Freedom of Information Act. If elected, I plan on continuing my efforts at the county level.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Without having full insight of the fundamentals of the Cook County budget, it is nearly impossible to have a thorough and justifiable response to this question. In fact, I believe that the lack of transparency of the workings of the Cook County government is one of the reasons driving opposition to the sales tax increase. To the extent that a legitimate need is shown for additional revenues, the sales tax may be warranted. But there still exists, at a minimum, a question of whether this is the only manner in which to proceed at this juncture. There are unquestionably other justifiable cuts that could, and should, be made prior to increasing taxes, but once again, without a full and clear picture of Cook County's fiscal budget, this answer cannot be justified either. At this time, I am unable to determine what, if any, revenue increase I would support until I have a better, and more transparent, grasp of the county's true fiscal situation.

Of equal importance has been the unfortunate, but illuminating, drama in which the will of the Board had been previously thwarted by the draconian veto override threshold that existed until recently in Cook County. Hoping to avoid just such a situation, Mike Quigley and I jointly announced legislation 3 years ago to reduce this requirement. And while it has taken years of steady effort, I am glad that the idea has finally come to fruition. On Tuesday, December 1st, the Commissioners of the Cook County Board were finally able to represent their constituents by overturning President Stroger's veto and rolling back the sales tax by half a penny.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Cook County provides many essential services to constituents through the Departments of Public Health, Circuit Courts, and the Sheriff, to name the three largest agencies in Cook County. An evaluation of these three departments as well as others, to gauge more closely how and where Cook County is successful and where we can be more efficient is pivotal to making an informed decision as to where reductions or eliminations should be implemented.

In order to make Cook County more efficient, it is also necessary to examine the benefits of merging offices that perform similar, or related, functions. Because of the nature of the offices of the County Clerk and the Recorder of Deeds, they are ripe candidates for consolidation. Many large counties throughout Illinois and throughout the nation have combined the tasks of the clerk and recorder, streamlining the system and saving taxpayers money. The Cook County property tax system is another network of related offices that can be consolidated. The establishment of an Office of Tax Administration would simplify the taxpaying process for constituents, streamline the assessment process, make the system more accountable and efficient, and save Cook County approximately \$3 million dollars in the process. That being said, my initial review of the applicable laws leads me to believe that legislative action in Springfield would be needed to accomplish this goal. I am presently reviewing pursuing such legislation during the upcoming legislative session.

Democratic candidate Ted Matlak did not return a survey.

13th District - Evanston

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: John Michael Keefe
Email address: jmkeefe@me.com
Website: www.keefe13th.com
Twitter: DoctorKeefe

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Lowering the sales tax the full one percent. Balancing the county budget. Making all county facilities LEED compliant. Protecting the forest preserves.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Lowering the sales tax the full one percent.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? It must be lowered to help businesses to locate in the county, to reduce the amount of sales tax revenue leaving the county and to bring more jobs to the county.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The county can eliminate the forest preserve police. It also makes sense to consolidate county offices that handle taxes and the budget.

Candidate name: Larry Suffredin
Party: Democrat
Email address: lsuffredin@aol.com
Website: www.suffredin.org



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County?

1. The County must gain the confidence of its citizens. Just as the Independent Health Board has stabilized and expanded services while lowering its dependence on County tax resources all other parts of the County must do the same.

2. Making the budget process more transparent and getting budget done before budget year begins.

3. Getting property tax bills out on time so people have time to pay. Bills should be payable September 1 and March 1 to give people time to save the money for payment. This year people will pay on December 1 and then 90 days later on March 1 have to pay again. This is a serious problem when we expect people to have of their property tax bill available in a 90 day period.

4. Separate the Forest Preserve District Board from the County Board.

5. Making permanent the Independent Health Board.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Making permanent the Independent Health Board. This will guarantee better earned revenues and better management leading to more care.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I supported the recent repeal of .50% of the tax as the right thing to do. The tax was originally imposed to stabilize the County government and it has accomplished that. We should be looking for other ways to reduce the over-all sales tax rate.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Efficiency in Cook has to start with looking to increase earned revenues through service. Earned revenues, unlike taxes takes a change in worker's attitude toward their jobs and the people they serve. If workers see themselves as needing to be more customer friendly they will be more efficient and thus cut waste.

Green Party Candidates

Candidate name: George E. Milkowski
Email address: gmilkowski@sbcglobal.net



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Generally unfair tax structure that disproportionately hurts the poor and working poor and therefore tends to hurt business and the economy of the area.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Work to eliminate the sales tax and the property tax. I would replace with a county income tax with a personal exemption for individuals of \$25,000, \$40,000 for couples, and additional \$2,000 exemptions for each dependent. Businesses would be expected to have comparable tax rates based on gross sales, number of employees, or some other statistical figure with some built in exemptions that would generally favor smaller businesses as they are recognized as the incubator for jobs in the economy.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I am totally opposed to it. Please refer to my response to the previous question.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? I would take a long look at the structure and manpower need of the Forest Preserve District. It has been described as a pit of patronage and I believe that unnecessary. Managers and workers need to be removed from the payrolls.

Republican candidate Linda Thompson LaFianza did not return a survey.

14th District - Far northwest suburbs

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Jennifer Bishop Jenkins
Email address: Jennifer4CookCty@aol.com
Website: www.JenniferBishopJenkins.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? There is a significant loss of faith in Cook County due to the too often correct perception that Cook County government is a bloated, corrupt, wasteful, patronage-laden job machine. Yet we are the second largest government of our kind in the nation, and a larger unit of government than 33 states. Cook County is virtually synonymous with patronage and financial and social problems – the highest rates of violence, the largest jails, the biggest court system, the highest taxes, and the most unnecessary number of departments in order to feed the jobs/patronage machine. But we live in a wonderful, world class community whose good faith must be restored. We have stunning Forest Preserves that require protecting. We have a proud history that deserves to be honored and fulfilled. I will absolutely stand against the forces of the status quo to lead for changes to our problems, and put a leader with better ideas for better government into the 14th district seat.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My goals for Cook County: First,

to substantially reform the budget, including patronage, consolidating excess functions, focusing on the most vital services, and eliminating reliance on regressive and unstable sources of income that do more harm than good for the lives of the most vulnerable residents of the County. I will move to implement zero-based budgeting which will require all expenses to be justified with no assumption for their being continued without justification or demonstrated need. I am very committed to finding alternatives that emphasize PREVENTION and other best practices such as smart technologies to improve the functions of county government, while saving money and providing more and better services to the people. We have developed a nonsensical reliance on the emergency room for routine medical care for the indigent, and have been consistently "penny wise and pound foolish" in our unwillingness to invest in prevention measures that save far more cost and agony in the long run. As candidate for the Commissioner of the 14th District I am also committed to returning more county services to the half of Cook County residents who live in the suburbs.

What is your position on the county's sales tax? I support the full 1% repeal of the sales tax. The 14th District lies largely along the Lake-Cook border and the businesses in my district have lost money dramatically because of this regressive tax. I will seek the full repeal immediately upon entering office.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Cook County has significant room to consolidate functions and reduce personnel to save money for more vital front line public services. Salaries make up the bulk of the Cook County Budget. Every possible avenue for attrition, retirement, and downsizing through hiring freezes should be implemented while the County Budget is restored to sustainability. In addition, several very sound proposals have already been made by former Commissioner, now Congressman Mike Quigley and retiring Commissioner Forrest Claypool regarding consolidating office functions currently taking up several different divisions. These include combining Recorder of Deeds and Assessor, clerks and secretaries to the Board, etc. I support substantial consolidation of the different bureaucracies wherever possible in the county, and would strongly support an immediate shift to zero-based budgeting. The current President of Cook County Board, who recently proposed adding many new staff to his office for the 2010 budget, has serious room for personnel reduction in his office, especially with those that are "Shakman-exempt". Some of his staff have very high salaries, and for unknown functions. Some even earn more than he does for titles such as "assistant". The public must be given full disclosure of all patronage/exempt staff throughout county government so we can appropriately evaluate how best to increase efficient use of taxpayer resources. Patronage reform can do a great deal to bring budget stability to Cook County. Also, Cook County must aggressively seek grants and federal funding partnerships where they have been reluctant to in the past because of fear of the attendant oversight requirements. Here are just a few examples of what we can and must do to close the budget gap: Cook County's health care system reported this year an unbelievable 60% error rate in medical bill coding (most places nationally average 2-3%), making collection of fees owed to Cook County taxpayers virtually impossible. While the current board talks about better training for those personnel, doctors have assured me that there is software available to take over all these functions. Smart technologies should be used wherever possible to save the County money. Every single employee of Cook County should report confidentially through "virtual suggestion boxes" how to save money in their department and should be rewarded for all workable suggestions. One such suggestion I received recently from a janitor at Cook County Jail would save us millions in vandalism and lawsuit costs by installing more inexpensive security cameras. More cameras can do a better job and with less added personnel. Waste, fraud and abuse hotlines must be set up. Another example of a position that could easily be cut without affecting vital front line county services is a full time salary of \$110,000 paid to a single staffer for traveling around the county promoting prostrate exams for men. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg. I am willing to do the hard work of digging deep and going through the entire budget for Cook County, item by item, and finding where we need to make changes for sustainability.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Gregg Goslin
E-mail address: gregg_goslin_on-line@comcast.net
Twitter: GreggGoslin



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County government? The essential services provided by Cook County are healthcare and public safety. Providing these services, even in the most efficient and economic manner, requires an enormous amount of money. Because the great majority of Cook County citizens and taxpayers do not use the services provided by the county jail, court system or county healthcare system, it is often difficult to justify the amount of money required to maintain these services.

My role is to work to ensure that the resources entrusted to the county by the taxpayers is utilized with thoughtful attention to the most urgent needs. We've begun some of this work, implementing better controls and increasing transparency of operations.

The county needs to examine every aspect of its operation to determine what is essential to support the mission and what is not. In the words of the *Chicago Tribune* it needs a "leaner architecture". That won't happen until the workforce is shrunk and generous employee benefits/pensions are in line with those found in the private sector. All parts of the county need to be disassembled, closely examined, adjusted, eliminated or expanded as necessary, before the county can be rebuilt into a more efficient and economical unit of government.

What will your number one priority be? I have an aggressive agenda for the next term, including:
1. Reduce the sales tax another ½% This regressive tax adds an especially onerous burden to residents in the 14th District, as we border three other counties, putting local jobs, businesses and our quality of life in peril. 2. Convert the county pension plan into a two tier system. The current system is simply unsustainable. My proposal includes restructuring the plan for new employees by converting from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan, raising the early retirement age from 50 to 55, raising retirement age from 60 to 62 and decreasing annual benefit from 80% to 65% of final salary, eliminating automatic year 3% pension increases and replacing with CPI adjustments. 3. Consolidate all Information Technology functions into a single Cook County IT Department. The county currently spends some \$150 million per year on various IT projects that lack strategy, coordination and effectiveness. Properly applied technology can improve performance and create an operating environment that will allow the county to reduce duplicate personnel, create efficiencies and save money over the long-term. The first step is to set clear strategic goals and then measure and manage our way towards them. 4. Establish a Homeland Security Committee to provide oversight and accountability of Homeland Security functions and the vast amounts of federal dollars that flow into the county.

These are lofty priorities, but achievable. A review of my priorities from four years ago – which are now law – demonstrates that change, improvement and progress are possible. My goals then were: 1. Establish an Independent Government Board for the Health System; 2. Change the law to prohibit one person from serving simultaneously as Commissioner and County president; 3. Comprehensive county-wide vehicle policy; 4. On-line posting of all property tax appeals; 5. Pension Impact Ordinance. 6. Money reporting of cash balances; 7. Amend Pension Code regarding Elected Official forfeiture of Pension for felony conviction.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I, together with Commissioners Schneider and Gorman, sponsored a full 1% repeal of the sales tax increase. That measure received six votes and was defeated. Not wanting the perfect to be the enemy of the good, I later was one of the sponsors of a ½% reduction of the sales tax, which passed with eleven votes.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? To meet its fiscal needs, Cook County must get its fiscal priorities in order. At a time when other units of government (and private sector businesses) are cutting back, Cook County is increasing its budget by over 3.3%. The first order of business is to focus on the spending side of the budget, rather than the revenue side.

A review of expenses should begin with an examination of the number of county employees, now reported to be in excess of 24,000 (representing 71% of the budget) and followed closely by a review of generous employee benefits. In an era of downsizing in both the public and private sectors, due in large measure to the efficiencies of technology, Cook County appears stuck in a time warp. The county's employee medical insurance coverage is unprecedented in either the public or private sector. In my private sector business, our employees receive medical insurance, with co-payments required. Family coverage is available at an extra cost. Co-payments and benefits change as the market and our insurance costs change – not so at the county. Co-payments and benefits have changed very little in the eleven years I have been there. The county pension benefit is exceedingly generous and is simply unsustainable.

The Health System reduced its revenue request from the county Board by \$74 million, or 19% in FY2010. To reduce costs and streamline operations, the county needs only to study and follow the action steps taken by the Health System Board this past year. It needs to downsize/right-size its workforce and become more aggressive with increasing fee-based revenues.

Republican candidate Patrick O'Donoghue did not return a survey.

15th District - Far northwest suburbs

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Timothy O. Schneider
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/home.php?#/profile.php?ref=profile&id=1704394870
Twitter: fighting15th

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? I believe a major issue facing Cook County is our structural deficit. The Cook County Board has consistently ignored the fact that due to personnel costs (which make up around 80% of our annual budget), there will be a perpetual budget deficit. This is one of the reasons why our annual budgets fluctuate between budget cuts and tax and fee increases. The only way to cure this chronic fiscal problem is to reduce the size of County government through a reduction in headcount. Another major issue that is directly related to our structural deficit is the FULL repeal of the 1% sales tax increase that was passed in 2008. A full repeal of the 1% sales tax increase will force the Cook County Board to stop ignoring a structural deficit that is directly related to the costs associated with employing over 23,500 employees. Another major issue the County is facing is ethics reform. I was proud to have authored (and passed) a campaign finance reform measure that lowered the contribution limit from \$1,500 to \$750 for persons or companies that have done business with Cook County (including registered lobbyists). The simple fact is large campaign contributions buy access and access buys influence. This legislation can begin the process of restoring confidence and ensuring that influence peddling is eradicated from Cook County government. Another major issue that faces Cook County is patronage and the hiring of politically connected and unqualified personnel in Cook County government. The only way to make Cook County government the most efficient operation it can be is by hiring employees based on "what" they know, not "who" they know.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My three highest priorities for my next term will be a full repeal of the sales tax increase that took effect in 2008, establishing an Independent Board of the Cook County Bureau of Human Resources, and continuing my efforts to ensure that the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center is run with the best interests of the children in mind (not the politically connected). As previously mentioned, a full repeal of the 1% sales tax increase will force the Cook County Board to stop ignoring a structural deficit that is directly related to the costs associated with employing over 23,500 employees. This year I was proud to introduce a budget amendment that sought to cut \$104,770,041 from the County budget while exempting critical services like the Cook County Bureau of Health, the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, Department of Corrections, Medical Examiner, etc). While exposing and eliminating patronage has been at the heart of my efforts in reforming Cook County government, I am excited to move forward with plans to create an independent Board of the Cook County Bureau of Human Resources. Run much like the current independent board of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System, the idea is to take hiring out of the hands of the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and give it to an independent board who can hire employees based on qualifications and experience, not political clout. The operation of the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center has been a big concern of mine for years. I believe Earl Dunlap has done a tremendous job of coming in, triaging the entire center, and determining what needs to be done to create the safest and most professional environment possible. In my numerous visits to the JTDC, I have seen firsthand the changes that are being implemented. As commissioner, it is my goal to continue to support Mr. Dunlap's efforts, make certain the facility is staffed with experienced personnel, and ensure that the JTDC isn't co-opted by political or labor influence.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Being a commissioner of a district that directly borders DuPage and Kane counties (with McHenry and Lake counties close by), I have seen firsthand the adverse effects of this reckless tax increase. There are businesses that sit on the border with Cook County with signs in their window advertising "No Cook County Sales Taxes". A full repeal of the sales tax will not only encourage businesses and consumers to return to Cook County to sell and purchase goods and services, it will force this board to make the long overdue cuts it needs to reform a bloated inefficient government.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Much like the performance

improvement assessment Navigant Consulting conducted for the Cook County Health and Hospital's system, Cook County must execute a similar assessment Countywide. In the case of the Health and Hospital's system, Navigant was able to identify areas where staffing levels were too high and more importantly, where taxpayer dollars were being misallocated. I believe it is a great idea for the County Clerk and Recorder of Deeds offices to merge. The Recorder of Deeds office is notorious for posting negative revenue variances and the simple fact is their work volume has decreased year after year. The County Clerk's office currently has the infrastructure in place to handle such a merger that I believe would result in consolidation of services, efficiencies, and an enhanced customer service experience.

Democratic candidate Jim Steven Dasakis did not return a survey.

16th District - West suburbs

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Bill Russ
Email address: presidentruss@aol.com
Website: www.billruss.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The extra sales tax driving business and jobs out of Cook County. The health care system. End patronage jobs and favors. Make the budget process more open and transparent. Do not sell off any forest preserve land to private interests. Let's promote business and give incentives so we can get new businesses in Cook County.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Better health care for all Cook County residents. Also work closer with the City of Chicago Health Department and all of the township health departments.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Roll it back or repeal the whole tax! It is driving businesses and jobs out of Cook County.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? End political favors and patronage jobs. Make the forest preserve district a separate non-partisan independent body. Eliminate the forest preserve police- the Cook County Sheriff's Department will patrol and save \$9 million a year.

Democratic candidates Eddy Garcia and Jeffrey Tobolski did not return surveys.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Tony Peraica
Email address: peraiclaw@aol.com
Website: www.peraica.com
Twitter: twitter.com/tonyperaica



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Corruption, high taxes, unsustainable salary, pension and benefits obligations for both exempt and collective bargaining agreement covered employees. We have too many layers of government and too many taxing units (1600) in Cook County. There is too much nepotism, patronage, waste, duplication and political influence in county government.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? To reform pension system, from defined benefit to defined contribution; to restructure collective bargaining agreements and process; to balance benefit packages (health, vision and dental) so that employees contribute more for these plans, and, finally, to make county board even more of a legislative and oversight body that represents taxpayers, not personal or special interests.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? It should be lowered further back to .75% where it was before.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? We must restructure payroll, pension and benefits for a reduced number of county employees. These three items comprise over 80% of the county's \$3B annual budget.

Republican candidate Brian Sloan did not return a survey.

Green party candidates Alex Matos and Alejandro Reyes did not return surveys.

17th District - West suburbs, Park Ridge

Democratic candidates

Candidate name: Victor Forsy
Email address: rx4reform@gmail.com
Website address: www.victor4us.com

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? I believe that there are two major issues facing Cook County. The first is the budget crisis that Cook County finds itself in. It is imperative that we work diligently to correct waste and overspending within the County while evaluating programs that are costly and failing to meet their goals. The second is the lack of trust.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? As a practicing physician, I will work to implement policies that require the Cook County Hospital Systems to seek proper reimbursement from both federal government and private insurance to reduce the burdensome cost to the citizen's of the County. Tens of millions of dollars go uncollected each year and I believe it is time to seek the reimbursements that we are entitled to receive.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? The tax rate in Cook County is too high. I was pleased that the Board voted to roll back the half cent "Stroger" sales tax. I believe that the tax causes undue burden on local businesses and stifles efforts to grow our local economy.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The County provides essential services such as first responders and healthcare. I believe that all County services need to be reviewed on a regular schedule (such as every 3 to 5 years) to be sure that they are providing the intending service successfully and cost efficiently. When I become a member of the Board I will take the time to evaluate the services provided by the County and work with other members of the Board to determine how they are doing. I believe that duplicative services should be eliminated and that cost benefit analyses need to be conducted. I would consider moving the Forest Preserve Police to the Cook County Sheriff to reduce spending on administration and overhead which, according to Sheriff Tom Dart would potentially save millions of dollars.

Democratic candidates Patrick Maher and Donna Sanders did not return surveys.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Elizabeth "Liz" Doody Gorman
Email address: liz@lizgorman.com
Website: www.lizgorman.com
Facebook: Elizabeth "Liz" Doody Gorman Page



What do you consider to be the major issues(s) facing Cook County?

Reforming Ethics Policies - This has been and will remain a vital issue for county government. At the fundamental root of Cook County government's problems has been the unethical approach taken by its administration in its hiring practices, tax and spending policies, execution of operations and services, etc. Our work to install the Independent Health System Board to oversee the Cook County Healthcare System was a major step in correcting the ethical lapses that overran the county healthcare system with a bloated bureaucracy that was filled with political patronage job holders who lacked professionalism, healthcare expertise and the ability to provide first class service for its patients and taxpayers. There are similar examples of this type of unethical approach to operating county government throughout county government.

I sponsored an ordinance amendment [09-O-65] which passed on September 16, 2009 that calls for anyone doing business or attempting to do business with the county must disclose any familial relationship with any elected officials [State, County or Municipality]. This will result in more transparency. I will continue to review and amend this ordinance as potential issues are brought to light.

Creation of a Strategic Plan (Short Term & Long Term) - County government has struggled for decades as a year to year program. What is needed is a strategic plan outlining a vision,

goal and strategic direction on a long range basis that the County should take based on increasing operational efficiencies while streamlining costs. It is also important that a financial plan and a plan of action to implement efficient initiatives be established.

Consolidation - Downsizing county government would result in establishing two critical items: financial stability and operational efficiencies. A legitimate strategic plan would be a major facet in realizing this ultimate goal.

What will your number one priority be, if elected?

Reforming Ethics Policies - This has been and will remain a vital issue for county government. At the fundamental root of Cook County government's problems has been the unethical approach taken by its administration in its hiring practices, tax and spending policies, execution of governmental operations and services, etc. The county board's work to install the Independent Health System Board to oversee the Cook County Healthcare System was a major step in correcting the years of massive ethical lapses that had overrun the county healthcare system with a bloated bureaucracy filled with political patronage job holders who lacked professionalism, healthcare expertise and the ability to provide first class service for its patients and taxpayers. There are similar examples of this type of unethical approach throughout our county government. I sponsored an ordinance amendment [09-O-65] which passed on September 16, 2009 that calls for anyone doing business or attempting to do business with the county must disclose any familial relationship with any elected officials [State, County or Municipality]. This will result in more transparency. I will continue to review and amend this ordinance as potential issues are brought to light.

What is your position on the Cook County Sales Tax? The record indicates that I have been in the forefront on this specific issue. On May 5, 2009, I sponsored ordinance amendments to repeal the 1% 2008 sales tax increase. Realizing some of Stroger's allies were not in attendance, I pushed for a vote and the amendments passed [they were numbered 09-O-29 and 09-O-30] President Stroger quickly vetoed it. The board's attempt to override the veto came up one vote short of the needed 4/5 majority. As a result of this arcane threshold, legislation was pushed in Springfield to change the 4/5 majority down to 3/5 putting it in line with all other governmental bodies in the State of Illinois. I sponsored the resolution [09-R-458] urging the legislature and governor to act swiftly to pass and sign the veto override legislation (Senate Bill 1868), which they did in October.

The county board successfully moved November 18, 2009 to repeal 0.5% of the Sales Tax on a vote of 12 to 5. We attempted to pass a 1.0% repeal but could not garner the necessary votes. Having exhausted all attempts in that regard, through our persistence and determination we were able to craft a compromise to get the needed 12 votes for the 0.5% repeal: A victory for the taxpayers and businesses who spoke out so strongly on this issue. This should be the first step in addressing the sales tax issue. I will continue to fight for a fair and equitable sales tax that does not put our businesses in an economic disadvantage and take more money out of consumers' pockets. This past week saw the same 12 commissioners successfully override the president's veto on the sales tax repeal. The Sales Tax Repeal and the Veto Override marks a new chapter in Cook County government.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Improving the overall performance of the county healthcare system, the top expenditure, is critical to reducing spending and waste. The independent board has been making huge strides in streamlining healthcare operations and there is still much more work to be done in this area.

Consolidation needs to be a major tool for reform in 2010. Downsizing county government would result in establishing two critical items: financial stability and operational efficiencies. A legitimate strategic plan would be a major facet in realizing this ultimate goal. Upgrading technology and operations will lead to major cost reductions as county government has been behind the curve in these areas. By bringing in these upgrades, it will result in the reduction of personnel needed to administer these operations and services and that's where the real savings will occur with the elimination of unnecessary salaries and benefits.

Republican candidate Mark Thompson did not return a survey.

Green party candidates Richard Dalka and Matthew Ogean did not return surveys.

Cook County Assessor

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Joseph Berrios
Email address: jb@electjoerberrios.com
Website: www.electjoerberrios.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? One of the major issues facing the County is funding for healthcare and other County services for citizens who cannot afford adequate healthcare.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My number one priority is to change the focus of the Assessor's Office from computer generated assessments to a taxpayer focused, service oriented process. I will implement individual hearings that will bring taxpayers face to face with the analysts deciding their cases. I will also create an extensive outreach program. I plan to assemble a team of experienced analysts and Taxpayer Assistance Specialists to reach out to individual taxpayers, community organizations and community leaders to keep the Assessor's Office

in touch with the true economic conditions and concerns of neighborhoods in the County. The team will remove the mystery from the process and the office, making the office and process more accessible.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support the gradual repeal of the 1 percent sales tax increase. It was meant to be a temporary measure and not an ongoing revenue source. I remain extremely concerned, however, that there has been an inadequate analysis of the potential adverse implications for the hospital and the related clinical and other health services we provide to our most needy citizens. The County Commissioners voted overwhelmingly to repeal a portion of the sales tax increase on November 17, 2009. Unfortunately, the financial advantages and disadvantages of the sales tax increase are not self evident nor have they been articulated clearly to the press or the public. The County must look at revenue and spending; implementing changes that streamline processes and add new efficiencies by improving automation and creative innovation.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Reducing spending can be accomplished by eliminating duplicative processes and increasing automation and technological resources across County offices.

Democratic candidates Raymond Figueroa, Robert Shaw and Eugene "Gene" Staples did not return surveys.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Sharon Strobeck-Eckersall
Email address: Shareckers@gmail.com
Website: CleanUpCookCounty.org



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? 1) The County is spending too much money. We need to cut

spending. 2) Eliminate the continual increase in property taxes. 3) The County sales tax is too high which is forcing businesses to leave the County and go to adjacent counties where taxes are lower.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? We need to cut spending, which will enable the County to decrease the high property taxes.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? It is too high and forcing people who live in Cook County to show in other counties which is hurting our businesses.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? 1) Reduction in government. 2) Reduction in programs that are not being used as much as others.

Green Party candidate Robert Grota did not return a survey.

Board of Review

1st District

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Brendan F. Houlihan
Email address: Brendan@Brendanhoulihan.com
Website: Brendanhoulihan.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The major issues facing Cook County include a crisis of confidence in County government's leaders and the flight of homeowners and businesses from Cook County because of the tax burden. We must take dramatic action to restore the public's trust in County government. Initially, this must include a complete rollback of last year's sales tax increase and a comprehensive effort to streamline County government and create greater transparency. I discuss each of these in the questions below.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? I initially ran for the Board of Review because I believe that residential homeowners should have the same access to the property tax system as powerful corporate interests. It is my top priority to bring the Board of Review and the property tax appeals process directly to the people of Cook County. During my first three years in office, I have conducted property tax appeal seminars in over 200 communities throughout Cook County. I plan to continue increasing awareness through an even more aggressive public awareness campaign, including property tax appeal seminars in every area in my district, public service announcements, and phone banking to ensure that residents know about their right to appeal.

I also want to establish a complete modernization of the tax review process to ensure transparency, improve efficiency and cut waste. Recently, I proposed a system that will automate the Board of Review and completely eliminate the need for paper files. Currently, taxpayers must file

a paper appeal with the Board. Then, the Board creates a paper file for the taxpayer's appeal. This file is then physically passed to each Commissioner's staff for analysis. Under my proposal, homeowners will appeal online and the Board will conduct its analysis electronically. The result will be an overall increase in efficiency and complete transparency with every Board of Review file available instantly online.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Since day one, I stood against the 2008 sales tax. As a result, I favor the County Board's decision to partially roll back that sales tax increase, but I do not think it goes far enough. The County Board should eliminate the 2008 sales tax increase.

The only answer to budget shortfalls should not always be a tax increase. We need to explore ways to cut costs, waste and duplication of tasks.

The county can boost revenues by getting up to date on outstanding billing, particularly at its hospitals and health clinics. I think we should seriously consider doing extensive audits of numerous departments to save tax dollars and identify and end bad practices.

I'm in favor of tougher ethics rules to end corruption that costs taxpayers millions of dollars. As a member of the board, I would look into cost savings through partnering with other counties across the state for bulk purchasing, specifically for items such as insurance coverage and office supplies. In addition, I would also push for the complete modernization of appropriate county offices to ensure better transparency and efficiency. This I believe would go a long way towards ending the 'pay-to-play politics' that costs taxpayers millions.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Cook County must increase efficiency and reduce headcount. As commissioner, I have reduced the number of my positions in my office. Each year, my office has handled a record number of property tax appeals with fewer staff. However, there is more that can be done.

Recently, I proposed a system that would

automate the appeals process at the Board of Review. Upon its implementation, this new system will allow us to eliminate the costs of supporting a paper file system. As a result, this new system will enable us to curb the need for more staff.

Republican Candidates

Candidate Name: Sean M. Morrison
Email address: Sean@morrisonsecurity.com

Major issue facing Cook County: High Property taxes, uncontrolled government growth which leads to excessive taxation on every level: Income, sales and property.

Number one priority when elected will be: Lower Property taxes!

Position on county sales tax rate: We need to roll back the excessive sales tax rate which is the direct effect of the excessive waste within cook county bureaucracy.

The avenues I see to reduce Government Spending and waste are: as a start an immediate reduction in the spending and budgets of ALL "non-Vital" county services and departments by 20% across the board.

Candidate name: Dan Patlak
E-mail address: danpatlak@aol.com
Website: www.ElectPatlak.com
Facebook: Citizens for Dan Patlak



What do you consider to be the major issues facing Cook County? Corruption, rising property taxes, and a declining business sector.

What will your number one priority be, if you

are elected? My number one priority will be to provide fair and accurate assessment review to property owners who appeal at the Board of Review regardless of the property classification and regardless of who may represent the appellant.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? The recent 1% sales tax increase should be rolled back immediately. The remaining ¾% tax should be phased out in order to promote commerce within Cook County.

What avenues do you see for increasing business growth and economic development in the County? See answer immediately above. Put a real cap on the rate of property tax increases for residential, commercial and industrial property.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The easiest and most effective way to reduce county spending is to bring the county employee health care and pension system in line with private industry. That means county employees should pay more of their own health insurance premium and that new county hires be put into a 401k type program instead of the defined benefit program now enjoyed by current county employees.

We are also in need a more balanced county government in terms of the number of Democrat versus Republican elected officials we have. As things stand now, there are precious few checks and balances in county government which provides the temptation and opportunity for rampant corruption through out our county. For example, the Board of Review's three commissioners are all Democrats. The remainder of the county property tax affiliated offices, the Clerk, Treasurer and Assessor are also led by Democrats. It is difficult to imagine that elected officials who are all members of one Party and who completely control our property tax system, will provide the appropriate level of oversight on each other so that citizens can be assured that the system is not being abused.

Cook County Sheriff

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Tom Dart
Email address: paula@votefortomdart.com
Website: www.votefortomdart.com



Major issues facing Cook County/Priorities if elected: I can't speak to all of Cook County government, but I would like to address the major issues facing the Cook County Sheriff's Department and what I will make as my priorities if I am re-elected.

1) Improving upon video technologies recently introduced at the Cook County Jail. We recently introduced video visitation at one division and I hope to expand it across our facilities, ensuring greater safety for staff and visitors, while also further limiting the ability for contraband to be smuggled inside. It is my hope that video technologies will be considered for basic court hearings in the suburban and criminal courts buildings, giving us the potential to cut millions from our budget on transportation and staffing costs.

2) I would like to move the county beyond the decades-old and costly Duran Consent Decree. This lawsuit was filed when the jail was bursting at the seams, conditions were anything but sanitary and management had a much different approach to corrections. Today, the jail is almost 1,000 bodies below capacity and has been consistently below capacity for more than a year. I have moved my

office from downtown to the jail to provide on-site management at the top levels of this department. I have also instituted weekly accountability meetings, requiring every jail superintendent and director to report to me, with specific details, about every incident at the jail and its cleanliness. Additionally, we have continued to expand the use of alternative sentencing, including electronic monitoring, as a means to alleviate overcrowding at the jail.

3) I would like to expand our efforts, already put in place last year, to make our evictions more humane. As you may know, I stopped conducting foreclosure evictions because of the rampant problems of tenants living in foreclosed buildings not receiving any notification of an eviction until the day our deputies arrived on scene to put them out. This system had to stop and after my decision to halt evictions, we developed a detailed notification system, ensuring proper notice is given. Now, I'd like to build upon that. Specifically, I would like landlords or mortgage-holders to notify our deputies of the ages of anyone living in a residence - empowering our office to notify appropriate social service agencies of anyone who might be in need of specific help. If there is a child or an elderly tenant in the building, we can approach it with appropriate care.

Avenues to reduce government spending/waste: Roughly 90 percent of my 6,300 employees are sworn officers who are subject to collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the county board. Of my \$472 million budget, 91 percent of it is personnel costs. It is my job to come up with

a budget that adequately provides protection and service to Cook County's correctional system, courts and suburban police functions, yet also presents responsible spending on behalf of taxpayers. I have offered the county board several cost-savings measures that I hope they will consider for approval. Specifically, I have proposed closing all suburban courthouses at 6 p.m. during the week. Walking any courthouse floor as they day goes on finds decreased activity later in the day. Additionally, I have proposed closing weekend bond court in the suburbs, with the exception of Markham. On most weekends, visitors can find more court staff than defendants in our Skokie, Rolling Meadows, Maywood or Bridgeview courthouses. Simply making these two moves alone would free up the equivalent of 50 courtroom deputies - positions I haven't been able to create in more than five years. Though the county has added 40 new courtrooms in the last 12 years, the county board has not approved a new class of deputies since 2006. This shortage desperately needs to be addressed and it's my hope that a creative measure like this will bring some level of help. In addition, I have proposed an expansion of the electronic monitoring program. In the last two years, I have implored the judiciary to become more involved in this program and in recent months, we've seen more acceptance of this idea by the judges. We have approximately 300 detainees on EM now, but have the capacity for 1,200 more. If more judges accept the responsibility of deciding who should be placed on EM, we could possibly have 1,500 detainees released on a daily

basis - a number that would easily allow us to close an entire division at the jail. Finally, I have again asked the county board to consider abolishing the Forest Preserve Police Department, a \$1.5 million savings that would find patrol responsibilities simply shifted to sheriff's police officers.

Democratic candidate Sylvester Baker, Jr. did not return a survey.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Frederick Collins
Email address: vote4collins2010@yahoo.com



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? High crime rate, high taxes, loss of jobs, lack of leadership and corruption within our current government.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Provide equal and fair protection under the law for all of Cook County citizens. Bring qualified law enforcement experience to the Office of the Cook County Sheriff Department. Reform and Unite the Cook County Sheriff Police and Correctional Officers. Strengthen community

relations between the Cook County Sheriff Office and the public. Organize and institute a task force that will eliminate drug and gang activity in all of Cook County. Lower crime by 60% within the first year of my elected administration. Continue to be an advocate and to support the right of the entire United States Constitution.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I strongly support and advocate for rolling back Cook County taxes.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? By keeping taxes low. By being fiscally responsible with tax payers dollars. By providing tax incentives to small businesses and major corporations in Cook County that will hire and create services and jobs for Cook County citizens

Green Party Candidates

Candidate name: Marshall P. Lewis

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Safety, equality, careful spending and firm budgeting of the taxpayers' monies that the future of Cook County may be successful.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? To bring security and safety to the streets and correction to the jail to help stop the revolving door.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? If that is what was really needed to keep this county successful so let it be done.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Careful planning.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

Democratic Candidates

Candidate name: Stella Black
Email address: proptaxms@aol.com



What do you consider to be the major issues facing Cook County? The three major issues facing Cook County are water quality, water re-use and fiscal responsibility.

a. **Water Quality:** We need to measurably improve water quality for public and private use, and aquatic life, by working to remove pharmaceutical traces in our water. I also support exploring scientific-based and fiscally responsible ways to aid disinfecting treated water before it gets pumped back into our waterways.
b. **Water Re-Use:** We need to work to implement measures that make treated water re-usable for non-drinking use, thereby reducing the amount of water taken from Lake Michigan and reducing the amount of treated water pumped back into our waterways. Water is our most precious resource that needs to be protected. There is no alternative to water.
c. **Financial:** We need to reduce tax bills' impact on homeowners within the MWRD service area, ensure competitive bidding and present the need for an independent inspector general to help evaluate the MWRD's fiscal management.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My number one priority if I am elected would be to improve the environment through improvement of our water quality, explore water re-use options while being fiscally responsible. My goal is for us to leave our environment in a better condition than how we received it.

What is your position on the county's sale tax rate? The county's sale tax rate is too high. I believe others, and myself do shopping out of the county to avoid paying the high tax. If the rate were lower, it would draw more people to shop in Cook County and therefore increase county revenue.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? I believe that the formation of oversight committees to monitor spending in the county would dramatically reduce wasteful spending. Transparency is also key. All transactions and spending projects should be available to the public.

Candidate name: Maureen Kelly
Email address: maureenkelly2010@gmail.com
Website: www.maureenkelly.com
Facebook: Maureen Kelly for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is the least understood, yet the most vital public asset. No other office has a greater daily impact on the lives of the citizens of the region than the MWRD. Fresh, clean water is a commodity we often take for granted, so much so, that we cannot imagine our lives without it. The actions of the MWRD impact not only the lives of Chicagoland area residents, but also our neighboring states that rely on Lake Michigan for their drinking water. A poorly managed MWRD can have a devastating impact on the aquifers, creeks, rivers and streams that need efficiently treated water to thrive, as well as the small lakes, ponds, and sloughs.

The MWRD must work with scientists and experts across the globe to ensure that treated prescription and over-the-counter medicines do not show up in our drinking water. Recent studies have shown elevated levels of antibiotic, pain medication and other drug remnants in our drinking water. Mercury levels found in fish in our area lakes, ponds and streams are too high and must be addressed.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? I will prioritize the implementation of green technologies and educate and promote the use of rain capturing devices, like rain barrels connected

to downspouts at residences and business in an effort to stem the amount of rain water treated at district facilities.

Our clean water efforts should not rest solely on the health of Lake Michigan. We must work to ensure that every water table in the area is free of contaminants, including aquifers, streams, rivers, creeks, lakes and ponds. These important water sources have as much to do with a polluted water system as Lake Michigan and often contribute to the high levels of toxins found in the lake. And, I will work with the scientific community to find reasonable solutions to the problem of trace prescription and over-the-counter medicines in our drinking water.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? The MWRD does not receive funding from the Cook County Sales tax, nor does it have a voice in this issue. But, even though the MWRD is currently in good financial condition with a AAA bond rating I have concerns because the district is reliant on property taxes and that tax base is shrinking due to current economic conditions. There is an opportunity for federal and state funding for capital projects which should be pursued. But I am against the MWRD raising their tax rates.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Although the MWRD is currently in good financial condition with a AAA Bond rating, it lacks transparency. Board meetings are poorly attended and Requests for Proposals for bids over \$50,000 must be thoroughly vetted. All contractors, subcontractors and agents must be disclosed. No employee or board member shall have any financial interest in a company that does business with the district.

Candidate name: Barbara McGowan
Email address: mcgowan.barbara@sbcglobal.net

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The major issue facing our county is the recession and the poor economy, which has caused most government agencies to increase or propose some form of taxes due to the lost revenues. The poor economy has resulted in the lay-off of government employees, which has caused a short-fall in all types of government services. The rate of unemployment overall in Cook County is at an all time high, which is a major factor of our economic instability.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Continue to serve as Chairman of the Committee on Affirmative Action and advocate for the inclusion of minority, women and small business to perform work on MWRD construction and professional service contracts. I will continue to ensure that our Affirmative Action Program stands as model in the State of Illinois. I would also push for the completion of Phase II of TARP, and that our Storm Water Management Program be a priority to protect the citizens of Cook County from flooding.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I support the County's sales tax. Because of the poor economy and the drastic budget cuts, the sales tax had to be increased to support the Cook County Health System. If this tax is repealed, there would have to be drastic cuts in the Cook County healthcare system. It is my position that those poor and indigent people of Cook County that use this system will have no where to go for health services.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The MWRD has a AAA bond rating; however, every public agency in the county is facing some sort of budget crisis due to our poor economy. Although we have maintained a good bond rating, we have directed our staff to recommend ways that we can make an agency-wide 15% reducing in our 2010 budget. This can be done by reducing expenditures, and seeking to increase revenues including fees where possible and not raising taxes.

Candidate name: Kathleen Mary O'Reilly
Email address: kathleenmaryoreilly@comcast.net and Gardner823@comcast.net



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? Reduction in Tax; disinfection of effluent from MWRD treatment plants; storm and flood water control; completion of the Tunnel and Reservoir Project; and hydro-electric power generation by use of the waterways.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Reduction in tax.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? Opposed to increase.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Reduce the size of the Board of Commissioners and reduce their staff and perks.

Democratic candidates Theodore "Terry" Aguilar, Michael Alvarez, Wallace Davis III, Kathleen Mary O'Reilly, Mary Ann Sprypoulos and Kari Steele did not return surveys.

Republican Candidates

Candidate name: Paul Chialdikas
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Website: www.paulchialdikas.com
Facebook: Citizens for Paul Chialdikas



What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The major issues facing the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) are;

1. The district needs to promote and enforce greener building standards in order to help reduce taxpayer's money and promote a healthier environment.
2. MWRD needs to be more fiscally responsible – the district was caught up in a hiring scandal during which cost taxpayers over \$1.5 million dollars. If that was hidden from the taxpayer for the past several years, what else are they keeping from the taxpayers?
3. MWRD needs to improve its operations and make sure they work. Recently during a brief storm period, several of the pumps which operate overflow from rainfall failed. The back up pumps failed also, why??? If the district was managed with benchmarks and back up plans, issues like this wouldn't happen.
4. Hiring practices need to be improved.
5. MWRD needs to begin implementing stricter filtration standards from within and not rely on the EPA to dictate what it should be.
6. Transparency needs to be its top priority to the taxpayers.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? My priorities when elected will be as follows:

1. I will begin a campaign to educate the taxpayers on what the MWRD performs. I will promote the use of greener practices in order to save them money and help with saving the environment for the future. If we all work together for a common cause, major milestones can be achieved.
2. Fiscal responsibility is another priority. I will work very hard to eliminate all the wasteful spending from within the MWRD. Just one example would be is, why is there 300 interns hired during the summer months to the tune of over \$1.5 million. What is the staff of over 3000 performing? Why does it take so long for developers and other taxing municipalities to receive replies on engineering drawings and permit applications. We owe it to the taxpayers to save them money and become a more efficient district.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? I feel that the county government needs to repeal the tax increase and find ways to lower their operating costs in order to be more efficient. After that happens Cook County government needs to find innovative ways to encourage business growth and business retention through out Cook County in order to create more jobs and fuel more growth in our region.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? The MWRD can reduce its spending thru education of the public and thru a more stringent reporting process to the taxpayers. If the public was more aware of the processes that the MWRD performed for them they may be more cooperative and helping with items flushed down toilets or chemicals poured into sewers that pollute the waterways and need to be cleaned before they are redeposit into the waterways. It costs the MWRD to perform these tasks and if there was a way to create involvement and find other ways to properly dispose of items this would alleviate the pressure on the MWRD costing it less thus passing it on to the taxpayers.

A more stringent reporting process needs to take place at the MWRD. Right now there is no way to view what bids are available or who was awarded bids for projects via an online system. There is also no performance accountability that can be viewed by the taxpayers. Public companies need to perform for their shareholders in order to stay in business and I feel the MWRD needs to function more like a public company and be more fiscally responsible with taxpayer's money.

Republican candidate Jimmy Lee Tillman II did not return a survey.

Green Party Candidates

Candidate name: Nadine Anne Bopp
Email address: nadbop@gmail.com
Website: NadineBopp.com

What do you consider to be the major issue(s) facing Cook County? The economic situation. In the MWRD they have the perfect opportunity to bring in income by producing electric energy with methane (from sludge). They would be able to become zero energy and reduce emissions at the same time.

What will your number one priority be, if you are elected? Devise a program to remove all bacteria, pharmaceuticals and toxins from effluence. The second issue is to separate runoff from residential waste water. Energy production from sewerage sludge via methane gasification, and finally decentralization of waste water processes utilizing new technologies and water conservation legislation.

What is your position on the county's sales tax rate? It needs to be reduced. Conservation, energy efficiency and eliminating the redundancy of services could fix the budget deficit.

What avenues do you see to reduce government spending and waste? Redundancy of services is rampant in the city.

Eliminate the patronage system and hire trained professionals in decision making positions. Term limits for all elected officials along with a cap on the salaries of high level political appointees.

Develop a comprehensive energy policy that promotes conservation and alternative energy programs. This would reduce greenhouse emissions and create green jobs that would serve those from the manufacturing sector as well as the technical sector.

Green Party candidates John "Jack" Ailey and Diana Horton did not return surveys.