

# Chicago Tribune CHICAGOLAND

## 1,000-plus jam mayoral candidates forum

Focus: Improving all of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods

By **BILL RUTHHART**  
Chicago Tribune

A standing-room-only crowd of more than 1,000 people packed the University of Illinois at Chicago Forum on Saturday morning to watch a Chicago mayoral forum focused on doing more to improve all of the city's 77 neighborhoods.

Prospective voters in the Feb. 26 election waited in long lines outside in the snow to pass through security and hear 12 mayoral candidates discuss jobs, economic development, immigration and policing during a 90-minute forum during which organizers banned candidates from launching any political attacks against one another.

And as part of a successful bid to prevent loud outbursts from the capacity crowd, audience members were encouraged to wave green placards when they heard something they liked and red ones when they didn't.

As a result, the forum was heavy on mini, one-minute policy discussions from the large group of candidates, but it broke little new ground as the mayoral contenders largely repeated policy positions they already had released and discussed in other venues.

The event was hosted by One Chicago for All Alliance, a group of 30 community organizations, and was moderated by Chicago Sun-Times columnist Laura Washington.

There was no discussion of the federal corruption charge against embattled veteran Ald. Edward Burke that dominated the last mayoral forum. And this time, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle attended after backing out of the last event.

The liveliest discussion of the UIC forum focused on improving policing in the city. Candidates were asked whether they backed the pending federal consent decree to reform the Chicago Police Department and what they would do to "restore trust, accountability and fairness" while improving "police effectiveness" since just 17 percent of homicides resulted in an arrest last year.

Former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas said 80 percent of the consent decree was "common sense," such as more training and better equipment for officers. He noted that the city has 10,000 students, 90 percent of them minority, in military academies in



Gery Chico, one of 12 mayoral candidates in attendance, answers a question during the One Chicago for All Alliance forum at UIC on Saturday.



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the city and CPD should be working to recruit officers from those programs to hire "the next generation of cops from the community." He also slammed Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration for allowing the Police Department to shrink during his tenure.

"Do not underestimate to the degree this Police Department has been degraded, not filling close to 2,000 vacancies, allowing the detective division to be gutted almost in half, going from 1-to-10 to 1-to-30 sergeant ratio," Vallas said. "That's accountability you can believe in."

Moments after Vallas said CPD needed to hire more officers to fill vacancies and bring detectives out of retirement, public policy consultant Amara Enyia was pushing for some of the money in the police budget to be set aside to

"build stronger institutions in our neighborhoods first," including funding block clubs in the city's neighborhoods hardest hit by violence. And, she said, Chicago students aren't going to sign up to be cops until the department becomes legitimate in their eyes.

"You cannot build trust where there is no relationship. You cannot build trust where there is no legitimacy. And you certainly can't recruit anyone into a department that lacks legitimacy," Enyia said. "Implementing the consent decree is a matter of restoring legitimacy to an institution that has the power to determine life and death in this city. We have to do it."

Preckwinkle backed the consent decree while saying the city has "deep-seated issues with trust" between minority communities and the police. Unlike the other

candidates, she appeared to read from prepared remarks for most of the event.

"As each of my kids got to be a teenager, I sat down with them and had the talk — and it wasn't about sex, it was about how you deal with police on the street," Preckwinkle said. "You're always respectful. You never argue. You keep your hands where they can see them. If they take you to the police station, call me. Every black and brown parent I know has had that conversation with their kids. White parents don't have those conversations."

Former U.S. Commerce Secretary Bill Daley declared the crime challenge "the single biggest issue facing our city" and called for 40 hours of mandatory training for all officers in the first year of the consent decree. State Comptroller Susana Mendoza repeated

her childhood story of being afraid of crime in Little Village growing up and said she would implement the consent decree while placing social services in 50 schools in the city's most crime-ridden neighborhoods.

City Hall veteran Gery Chico again threatened to sue Indiana and Wisconsin over their lax gun laws that he said feed Chicago's crime, and businessman Willie Wilson repeated his plan to hire four police superintendents who would divide the city in quarters. Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown said she would bring in "law enforcement experts to overhaul CPD in its entirety" while former federal prosecutor Lori Lightfoot repeated a frequent line about her experience making her best prepared to handle the crime problem without having to "learn on the job."

Bridgeport attorney John Kozlar repeated a plan to require 60 percent of officers in any police district to live in that district. Former Ald. Bob Fioretti delivered the closest thing to an attack in the forum, taking a not-so-veiled shot at former Chicago police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, who was sitting at the other end of the stage.

"We need a professional superintendent. That's been the problem," Fioretti said. "That's always been the problem for the last 20-plus years. We need to make sure we have someone who ensures there is proper training and hiring."

When it came to his turn,

McCarthy didn't address Fioretti's slight. Instead, he said the city couldn't have "a legitimate Police Department under an illegitimate government," adding that it was time to "do away with the Chicago way." McCarthy also responded to the staffing criticisms from other candidates by saying the number of officers and the detective division are at the highest they have been in 10 years, proclaiming "that is not the problem."

The former top cop drew a wave of green placards from the crowd as he addressed the lack of trust between the communities and officers, and called on the department to implement the recommendations of former President Barack Obama's task force on 21st-century policing that he said worked when he ran the force.

"We need to have a very difficult discussion about race. We have to talk about slavery, black codes, segregation, Jim Crow, redlining. That's what put us in this position," said McCarthy, who has described himself as a conservative Democrat. "I love it when people talk about restoring trust, but you can't restore something you never had."

That line drew an audible "Oooooo" from the crowd and more green cards of praise from audience members. But McCarthy didn't mention one key campaign position that wouldn't have gone over so well: He is opposed to the consent decree.

bruthart@chicagotribune.com  
Twitter @BillRuthhart

## Emanuel to propose tighter ethics rules

Issues include jobs that aldermen can't hold, contributions

By **JOHN BYRNE**  
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Rahm Emanuel will use the even-greater-than-usual crisis of faith in Chicago public officials following the attempted extortion charge against Ald. Edward Burke to try to tighten up city rules on what outside jobs aldermen can hold and how they can influence City Council debate on behalf of business clients.

The mayor doesn't want to go as far as other calls for ethics reforms that candidates looking to succeed him have pledged in recent days — including a proposed ban on City Council members from all outside employment.

Instead, as part of a package of proposed ethics reforms he will introduce to the City Council in upcoming weeks, Emanuel wants simply to expand the types of jobs aldermen aren't allowed to hold.

Currently, aldermen can't represent entities who have matters before the city in which the city is an adverse party. Emanuel's ordinance also would prohibit them from representing anyone "who has the right to become an adverse party," according to the mayor's office.

That would preclude council members from representing developers and property owners in the kind of property tax abatement work Burke did through his outside law firm, according to Emanuel's office. Federal authorities have alleged Burke withheld a zoning change for a driveway at a Southwest Side Burger King in his ward while trying to get the owners to retain his firm for its tax work.

It would also stop aldermen from representing clients in some bankruptcies and environmental issues, according to the mayor's office.

Emanuel also wants to extend a prohibition on campaign contributions from people who have business in front of the council,

to ban such contributions to city elected officials for six months before the matter comes up for consideration. Contributions are now outlawed only for six months afterward.

In a move to toughen a rule Burke frequently exploited, Emanuel also would make it much more difficult for the powerful City Council committee chairmen to oversee debate on requests that come before the council from people they represent. Burke often has participated in discussions in the Finance Committee he chairs, only to recuse himself from voting on the matter because he had a business conflict of interest.

Emanuel's idea is to allow chairmen to recuse themselves because of such conflicts just three times per year. More than that, and they would need to either give up their chairmanships or divest of the financial relationships that caused the conflicts. And aldermen couldn't preside over matters where they would need to recuse themselves from votes, as Burke often has.

Aldermen also would face much tighter reporting rules to explain such conflicts on city ethics forms under the mayor's package.

As he promised days after Burke was charged in a federal case that has rocked the city's political firmament, Emanuel will also move to transfer jurisdiction over the workers' compensation program to the city comptroller in the Finance Department. That would allow the city inspector general to launch investigations into the \$100 million-a-year program, a level of oversight Burke has blocked while keeping control over workers' compensation within the Finance Committee, which he has chaired for decades.

Emanuel also wants to rein in so-called aldermanic privilege, through which council members have a great deal of say over zoning issues within their wards.

City departments will be required to examine their policies to ensure it's clear that aldermanic letters of support "are not a precondition to any applicant receiving a permit or license

that should otherwise be granted based on the substantive determination of the department."

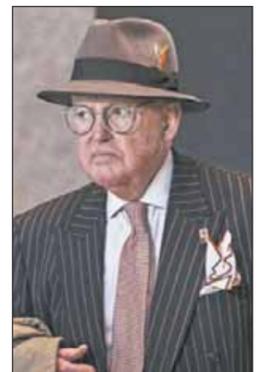
In the types of zoning cases such as the Burger King situation at the heart of the Burke case, Emanuel wants to require an up-or-down committee vote within six months, to try to prevent aldermen from trying to stall the process while leaning on the applicants.

Aldermen who object to zoning permits being granted will need to do so in writing, according to the mayor's plan.

The Burke scandal has dominated the mayoral race for more than a month since the FBI raided Burke's City Hall and ward offices in November.

Burke was released last week on a \$10,000 unsecured bond. He has yet to enter a plea, but his attorney, Charles Sklarsky, said the allegations were meritless.

While various candidates running to succeed Emanuel have criticized Burke, calling for him to step down as finance chair or to resign altogether, Emanuel has



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Ald. Edward Burke arrives at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago on Jan. 3.

stopped short of ripping the longtime alderman directly. A day after Burke was charged, Emanuel said he would pursue legislative reforms but that his actions couldn't "replace having a moral and ethical compass that informs your judgment of right from wrong, and what is appropriate."

Burke stepped down as Finance Committee chairman, but in a video on his ward Facebook page said he would run for a 13th full term as alderman.

jebyrne@chicagotribune.com  
Twitter @johnbyrne