



Candidate Name: Maria Hadden

Office Sought: Alderperson

Ward: 49

Campaign Committee Name: Maria for the 49th Ward

Campaign Website: www.mariafor49.org

Campaign Finance

1. **Running a political campaign is expensive, and candidates without deep pockets or wealthy connections often can't afford to compete. Would you support a public campaign financing program for Chicago city elections, such as a small donor matching or voucher "Democracy Dollars" program? Would you include the new elected school board and Police District Council in a public financing program?**

Yes. Yes, I would.

2. **Currently, entities doing (or seeking to do) business with the City are limited to contributing \$1,500 to City officials' campaigns. But the limitation [does not extend to officers](#) or other high-level employees of those entities, who can still contribute thousands to officials making decisions about contracts with their companies. Would you support eliminating this loophole, as [cities like New York](#) have?**

Yes, I would.

3. **Would you support reducing the City's campaign contribution limit from lobbyists and city vendors from \$1500 to \$750 or another number? Feel free to explain.**



If you could demonstrate a good reason for the reduction, then yes. I'd hope that the proposed change would be in response to a problem and would like to understand it.

- 4. Do you support any other campaign finance or other reforms that could make the system more transparent and ethical, and make it easier for people of diverse backgrounds to run for office?**

Yes, I would like to know what some of those reforms are though before signing off on them.

Elections

- 1. Ranked-choice voting (RCV) has been adopted around the country as a way of eliminating low-turnout primaries and making elections more democratic. Do you support the adoption of ranked choice voting (RCV) for Chicago's mayoral elections?**

[Click here for more information about ranked-choice voting.](#)

Yes, I think it would have a positive impact on Chicago. More people may even participate in our elections with this type of voting system.

- 2. Do you support the adoption of ranked choice voting (RCV) for aldermanic and other city offices?**

[Click here for more information about ranked-choice voting.](#)

Yes, I think it would have a positive impact on Chicago. More people may even participate in our elections with this type of voting system.

- 3. The petition gathering and challenge process can make it hard for some good candidates to make it onto the ballot. Would you support state-level efforts to reform the system and, if so, what would you propose?**

Yes, the top recommendation I have would be to have a standardized review process so that petition review and objections weren't left up to challengers and opponents. This creates a system that can favor incumbents and better



resourced candidates. I'd also strongly recommend a mandatory orientation for potential candidates before petitioning even begins. Many people don't understand how it works and don't understand campaign finance rules. While some of us go out of our way to learn it and follow the rules, others don't and flaunt the rules. Some people also may have information access issues or lack of access to resources to teach themselves the rules. Either way, it would be really helpful to new candidates, the general public, and the election process as a whole if through an orientation process, every potential candidate could be guaranteed to start with the same basic level of information about campaigning and how to qualify for the ballot.

- 4. Proposals to reform the petition process include allowing [digital on-site signatures](#) (e.g. [HB 4966](#)), [online signatures](#), or instituting a maximum number of signatures per office. What are your thoughts on these ideas?**

I'd have to look into them more, but on initial review they seem like good reforms.

General

- 1. Have you had any past experience with good governance and reform efforts? If so, we're eager to hear about it.**

Examples of good governance and reform efforts: government transparency and accessibility, ethics, voting and elections, campaign finance.

Yes. My work prior to running for office for about a decade centered on good governance and democratic practice. Specifically, I consulted with communities and local governments on participatory budgeting and participatory decision-making processes. I worked extensively through many wards in Chicago and led my organizations work throughout the midwest and southern United States. Centering the most impacted voices in decision-making and implementing processes that engender trust and participation in government are things that drive my work still.

- 2. Would you support an effort to reduce the size of the Chicago City Council? If so, what is your ideal number of wards/alderpeople? If not, please explain.**



No, working in cities throughout the country, I know the number of Chicago's city council representatives to be a benefit to constituents. Though machine politics have dominated Council's history, the level of attention and representation available to Chicagoans is unparalleled. The potential to make it more ethical and accessible is the way to make for a stronger government-constituent relationship. Shrinking the council will strip people of representation and especially doing so without reforms will only allow for powerful interests to have fewer people to control.

- 3. Recent news reports assert that some Chicago City Council committees rarely meet and may function more as remnants of a patronage system than as effective governing bodies. In your opinion, should the number of committees be reduced from nineteen? Are there any other reforms to the committee system you would propose?**

I think our committee structures absolutely need to change, however, the urge to just try and reduce it doesn't really get the heart of the problem. Council needs to assert control over our committee process as is written in our rules and our right. NYC has more than 30 committees, but they're smaller, specifically attached to policy areas and departments, and they actually meet! Addressing our committee structure and right-sizing their budgets is part of the reform we need. I also believe that if a committee is created, we should have to justify its existence with some minimum meetings or production of work. Potentially, the budgets assigned to a committee could be contingent on its performance.

- 4. Do you believe that Chicago's mayor and city council must do more to limit "aldermanic prerogative"? Why or why not? If so, what steps do you think should be taken to limit it?**

I think we just need to follow our own rules and allow ourselves to be held accountable. It's a culture and practice change more than a rule change. There have been some good moves in this direction in this term, but some of the initial reforms and culture changes have been undermined by the current Mayor's reliance on favors and allegiances from her handful of loyal alderpersons.



Ethics

- 1. How will you work to ensure city leaders elevate the needs of the public over personal or special interests?**

I like the ethics reforms we've made over the last couple of years. More authority for the OIG would be helpful as well. Ultimately, I'd like to see us create a city charter that centers the values and needs of our city and acts as a north star for what we should be working for.

- 2. Should candidates for mayor have to disclose their tax returns for the past two years?**

Yes.

- 3. Do you believe the Chicago City Council should become more independent of the mayor? If so, please explain the specific changes you'd like to see.**

Yes. We should make our own committees, rules, and in the future I'd like us to have a Council Speaker, similar to what we see in NYC.