

Girl, I Guess:

A Progressive Voter Guide to the 2020 Democratic Primary in Cook County and Beyond

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Who are we?

Girl, I Guess is BACK and itching to be disappointed by the results of the 2020 Democratic Primary!!! This is the fourth full edition of this guide (fifth, if you count our 2019 Runoffs guide), and the ambiance gets more bitter each time. Unfortunately, this time around we are bidding a very loving farewell to Ellen, who has fallen prey to that most heinous of activist curses: burnout. Everyone who has read the earlier permutations of this guide knows that we would never have the readership, or the humor, that make this guide so successful without Ellen and her magic. Ellen will still be around, and will be promoting the guide, but she's not part of the writing team anymore, so please don't bombard her with emails, because that would both clog her inbox and make her sad, which are things that are not progressive voting decisions. This year, Steph will

be writing the guide solo, and attempting to bring the same high quality of semitism and snark that y'all have come to love from Girl, I Guess.

Stephanie Skora is a grouchy trans dyke, and an anarchist with a political science degree. She is one half of the podcast TacoBagel, the Associate Executive Director at Brave Space Alliance, a member of the Coordinating Committee for Jewish Voice for Peace - Chicago, and a founding organizer of the Trans Liberation Collective.

Girl, I Guess is Jewish, queer, nerdy and dedicated to helping members of our community navigate a confusing ballot and identify the most progressive candidates. **I also recommend you consult with progressive / radical organizers in your community, especially queer people of color, because this guide is currently an individual effort, and I might be a Virgo smartypants know-it-all with a lot of opinions, but I'm far from infallible!**

Putting together this voter guide, is an act of love, but it is a lot of work! If you'd like to support Girl, I Guess, Steph's PayPal link can be found here! If you don't have PayPal, but still want to donate, you can support by donating through my Venmo account, @StephanieSkora, or my CashApp, $StephanieSkora.

**This guide does not represent the political views of my organizations or employer!!*

Why Bother?

As a learned Rabbi surely once told someone, somewhere, probably in Chicago, "Why choose between voting and complaining, when you can do both?" Lovely reader, in Cook County, and Chicago in particular, the Democratic primary basically *is* the general election. And while I would be neglecting my cultural duties if I tried to dissuade you from complaining, and then doing whatever you wanted and choose to vote or not vote, this guide is my attempt to get you to turn out. There are so many races where the Republican has little to no chance of winning, and the primary is our chance to shove a truly progressive option into elected office in many places in the City, State, and County. It wasn't too long ago that we saw the power of the progressive vote in Chicago, when a slew of Socialist Alderfolks were installed into the city council. In 2020, we're choosing a nominee for President, filling vitally important judicial vacancies, making important choices about the Illinois Congressional delegation, and the makeup of our General Assembly.

The General Assembly elected in 2018 was the most progressive in the state's history, and we have a chance to make it even *more* progressive this time around. And even if, like myself, you don't believe in the power of the Federal government to create real change or solve anyone's problems, there are several vital local races on the ballot this March, and matters such as bail reform in Cook County are hanging in the balance. Your vote *really* matters in the Democratic Primary, so even if you have to hold your nose and roll your eyes at yourself while you do it, I'd encourage you to give it the old college try. Girl, I Guess is designed to be your handy tool to

help you sift through the nuances of some of these confusing races, and help you decide who to vote for come March 17th, or earlier if you choose to vote early!

And listen up, **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER TO VOTE.** You can register when you show up to vote on election day! Or at any of the early voting places! Just bring two pieces of ID one of which provides proof of address (e.g., pay stub, utility bill). You don't need to have an Illinois ID! It's easy, I promise! If you're not sure what kinds of ID to bring, check out the Chicago Board of Elections site.

If you're planning on voting, **MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE!** For those of y'all who want to vote early, check here for early voting locations. If you want to vote on the day of the election, check here to look up your polling place.

Most importantly, remember that, if you're privileged with access, **VOTING IS YOUR RIGHT!** Sometimes, nefarious foolery on the part of some campaigns, or political parties, interfere with that right. If that happens, **call Election Protection at 866-OUR-VOTE**! This wonderful service contacted me, and asked to be put in the Guide as a resource, so here they are! They're a toll-free hotline staffed by nonpartisan legal volunteers who can help you on the spot. Election Protection is the nation's largest nonpartisan voter protection coalition whose local efforts are led by Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

Non-English speakers can use the following hotlines:

- 888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish)
- 844-YALLA-US (Arabic)
- 888-API-VOTE (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Bengali, Hindi & Urdu)

Methodology:

This guide is written by using publicly available information from the candidates' websites and in media outlets. I also consult with radical organizers that I trust. Candidates are judged based on the overall progressive nature of their platform, which varies for National and State races. Metrics that all candidates are being judged upon include:

- Support for a free Palestine
- Endorsements from meaningful progressives, and (some) past Girl, I Guess endorsees
- Progressive positions on climate change
- Progressives positions on racial justice
- Support for decriminalizing sex work
- Support for trans people, intersex people, and the broader LGBTQ community

- Support for addressing gerrymandering, and voter suppression
- Progressive position on policing, prison abolition, and bail/bond reform
- Donation/funding sources
- Stance on term limits
- Being pro-choice (AKA The Lipinski Rule)
- And more, depending on the individual races!

For past general and primary election guides, Girl, I Guess has handed out a single endorsement for each race, and indicated that candidate's name in **bold text**. I'll be keeping to that format this time around, both because it is easier to understand, and because there is no runoff election for primaries in Illinois. Whoever gets the most votes wins outright, so endorsing multiple candidates for a race can only serve to split the progressive vote in that constituency, and potentially help elect a less-progressive candidate.

How to use this guide:

I recommend that you use this guide as a companion to BallotReady. If you don't know, BallotReady is a website that will help you fill in your full ballot. Based on your address, they'll provide you with a tailored ballot with all your unique districts. They'll allow you to "add" your preferred candidates to your ballot, which you can then print out to take into the voting booth.

The table of contents below will help you navigate this guide and find the info you need. It also has the TL;DR on candidates Girl, I Guess recommends. But I do recommend reading the *why* behind those candidates if you have the time.

*If you think I've gotten any **non-Presidential** endorsements wrong,* please let me know on Facebook or via email and tell me why you think voting for another candidate is a stronger progressive strategy. **Girl, I Guess is a living doc and you may notice changes being made from time to time!**

You Say You Want a Revolution: President of the United States

Job Description:
Be better than the current guy, and do something meaningful, hopefully.

Candidates:
Amy "THE KLOB" Klobuchar
Deval "Who?" Patrick
Bernie Sanders
"Oh No" Joe Biden
Michael "What is this, 2008?" Bloomberg

Elizabeth Warren
Pete “I Hate This Man So Much I Literally Forgot To List Him” Buttigieg
Tom ~~Sawyer~~ Steyer
Andrew “Libertarian” Yang
Michael “Yes I’m Still Running” Bennet
John “Yes, I’m ALSO Still Running” Delaney
Tulsi “Literally a Fascist Sympathizer” Gabbard
Cory “Well This is Awkward Now That I’ve Dropped Out” Booker

The Dish:
deep, exhausted sigh From the beginning, Girl, I Guess has been predicated upon on the beliefs that it is not possible to vote our way to a revolution, and that it is beyond essential to be able to fully, harshly, and vocally criticize every single person running for public office in this country. Our purpose has always been helping radicals and progressives in our communities make the least violent and “least bad” choice for our elected officials, and giving our thoughts as to who represents that choice. This is why during the General Election, we add a “Feet to the Fire” section for Democratic nominees, to ensure that they don’t lie to the progressives and radicals who helped them get elected without being held to account. And I’m tired, y’all. This cycle has taken a toll on me.

I’ve been sick of this primary before it even began. This whole ordeal has been nothing but a giant, unmitigated shitshow that put front and center everything that’s wrong with the Democratic party, and everything that I feel is beyond fixing. The primary rules knocked candidates of color out of the debates before Iowa, and candidates of color who weren’t pseudo-Libertarian racist-joke-making White-Supremacy-Signaling embarrassment (cough AndrewYang cough) out of the race entirely before the January debate. Then, the DNC broke their own rules to allow Mike Bloomberg into the post-Iowa debates, despite his not taking donors, which is a deeply disgusting move for a party that’s clearly doing everything it can to lose the General Election. Tom Steyer, who my partner once mistakenly called Tom Sawyer in the most unintentionally masterful read of a candidate I can remember, is a joke candidate who should have stayed on the sidelines and continued to donate his millions to progressive causes in peace. Michael Bloomberg is a racist liar, and a fraud. Amy Klobuchar is a spunky Midwestern tough girl who gives off Big Top Energy and tells funny jokes at debates to try and distract from her Pragmatic Moderate stance, and her penchant for throwing things at her staffers. Joe Biden is an addled time traveler from the 1970s who thinks that a well-bleached smile and a charming working class anecdote are the things that win a general election. Pete Buttigieg has somehow been permitted to do do a months-long impression of what happens when a Chuck E. Cheese animatronic has a Star-Trek-transporter-accident type of ordeal, combines with the Hamburglar, and decides to run an assimilationist, homonationalist campaign for President despite having never been in charge of more than 102,000 people. Pete Buttigieg is also a human whose candidacy I take as a personal affront, as an insult to the legacy of Stonewall, and as the highest exemplar of why other marginalized people often have a difficult time trusting rich,

White, cisgender, gay men. Everyone else who is also running for President right now is so irrelevant that I forgot that they were on the ballot until I checked the Secretary of State's website to make sure I was being accurate.

From my perspective, there were only three acceptable candidates in this race from the beginning: Julian Castro, Elizabeth Warren, and Bernie Sanders. I've long said that I would be happy with any of them as the nominee, although I wish Castro had more experience. But, in a race where Pete Buttigieg exists, I hardly think Castro's experience is worth criticizing, and I wish his candidacy got more attention. He is my ideal choice for a Vice Presidential nominee.

I've been torn between Sanders and Warren for months, and tried to keep away from the senseless bickering between their respective camps. I've taken a "please don't divide the electoral left on my profile, thanks" stance to their race, and tried to make my decision based on my own politics, and the politics of my community. However, Elizabeth Warren has done some significant harms, most notably her decades-long fraudulent impersonation of a Native American (which coincided with her reported refusal to attend *any* Native events during her time at Harvard, despite being invited to all of them). She has also lately made moves towards the center, and positioned herself as a "unity" candidate, which are both moves that I find distasteful.

Warren's candidacy also has numerous bright spots, and she has notably put thought, care, and national screentime towards saying that the concerns of trans people, disabled people, and Black and Brown people matter. I will never forget the moment when Warren recited the names of murdered Black trans women on national television during an LGBTQ town hall with candidates; an event that Bernie Sanders did not attend (although he apparently had a previous commitment). Julian Castro's endorsement of Warren carries weight for me, because despite his past as an Obama Era moderate, and establishment Chuy Garcia-esque Latino, his candidacy made a visible and sustained move Leftward, and his platform was informed by the idea that marginalized people are the best experts on our own experiences, and problems.

If you want to vote for Warren, I cannot fault you. I know a great many multiply marginalized people whom I love dearly, and whose opinions I hold in extremely high regard, that are so fed up with Bernie Sanders and his supporters that they are voting for Warren partially out of spite and/or exhaustion, and also because they truly believe that she is the best candidate. I cannot say for certain that they are wrong, although I can say that with each passing day, Warren seems less and less likely to last past Super Tuesday, barring some massive polling error. Elizabeth Warren is a perfectly fine candidate for President, and if she were the Democratic nominee, I could endorse her in this guide with a clean conscience. That is not a statement I could make for other leading candidates.

UPDATE:

Since the initial publication of the Guide, Amy Klobuchar, Deval Patrick, Michael Bloomberg, Pete Buttigieg, Tom Steyer, Andrew Yang, Michael Bennet, and Cory Booker have all dropped out of the Presidential race. Good riddance.

Elizabeth Warren has also dropped out of the Presidential race, and I wish she could have done better once votes started to be cast. For folks reading this guide, it is my active request that we remember Warren's candidacy not for failing to end at a time that was convenient to Bernie Sanders, but for her memorable debate performances, and brutal verbal murder of Evil Soap Opera Stepfather Michael Bloomberg.

Bernie Sanders

Now comes the part that I've been avoiding writing since this guide started the drafting process. I'm giving a firm "Girl, I Guess" to **Bernie Sanders**, as this guide's choice for President of the United States. Now, this does not mean that I personally am a Bernie Sanders sycophant, or think that Zayde Bernie will save us all with his ferkakte revolutionary movement or whatever. This is far from a full-throated endorsement, and this is a decision that has taken a lot of thought, and been remarkably hard. I am currently, and have long been, deeply critical of Sanders's candidacy, despite voting for him in 2016. His campaign has had deep problems with just about everything that I care about, and his base of supporters often ranges from overzealous, to violently cultish. These are not good qualities for a politician's following to have. His campaign and supporters have also been either violent to, or dismissive of, every marginalized constituency on the Left at least once, despite Sanders himself having genuinely good politics for a Presidential candidate on the issues that matter most to those constituencies. Bernie has also been guilty of hand-waving away the concerns of the marginalized by pointing to his big-picture plans and policies as a method of solving those problems and returning to a class-reductionist analysis. He, and his campaign, also did something which I find particularly alarming: in 1997 (yes, yes 23 years ago), his political Memoir *Outsider in the House* contained a passage where he printed the n-word, in an attempt to critique racism. The memoir was later reprinted in 2015 as *Outsider in the White House*, and the n-word WAS STILL THERE!!! Sanders's campaign defended him in the controversy instead of apologizing, and most of the coverage has been in right-wing websites, but if you Google the title of the book, and type in the word on the search function, there it is, on page 157. A lapse in judgement about racial slurs in 1997 is bad, but that's one thing, purely because it was so long ago. Making that same error in judgement again, 18 years later, and then defending it another 4 years later, is a whole other story, because it shows a lack of increased understanding or additional education on the subject. I'm not going to sit here and say that critiquing racism is racism, because obviously it's not, nor am I going to tell folks, especially Black folks, how they should feel about this. But as a fellow White Jewish person, I personally feel concerned that Sanders felt it was ok to print the word, when it's been long established that the n-word is just one of those things that White folks should stay far, far away from, whether or not we're quoting someone else.

Clearly, Bernie Sanders is articulate, powerful, and thoughtful on a great many things that he cares deeply about, and has detailed solutions on how to address and solve particular problems. This is a fantastic quality in a candidate, but it also painfully clearly shows when he doesn't care about something, or doesn't consider it worth his full attention. I do not think that Bernie Sanders is a very good candidate, or has run a particularly good race. I do not think Bernie Sanders, or a Sanders presidential administration, is going to save us. I also don't have faith in Sanders as a general election candidate, despite his prodigious ability to turn out voters. He's prone to gaffes and repetitive statements on the public stage, and has given the same speech at debates and rallies so many times since 2016 that I could probably recite it by memory if you asked me to today, and not being able to come up with a new spin for his signature policies is worrisome. At the end of the day, Bernie Sanders is a grouchy old Jewish man who reminds me a bit of my deceased grandfathers, and I wouldn't want either of my grandfathers running the country, as zombies or otherwise.

That being said… I do believe that Bernie Sanders is the right candidate for Cook County, and for progressives in Illinois. The progressive leadership of our state has increasingly begun to coalesce around him. Movement leaders and organizers in Chicago whose politics I would go to bat for any day of the week, and twice on Shabbat, are lining up behind Bernie. The City, County, and State's elected progressive leadership have almost unanimously endorsed him, with a couple notable exceptions, including many individuals to whom Girl, I Guess has given our full-throated endorsement. His plans for Medicare For All are visionary, and represent the change that healthcare in this country has desperately needed for a long time. I believe that free college, universal childcare and a living wage for childcare workers are essential structures for a radical society. He clearly cares deeply about the climate crisis, and has the endorsement of many progressive movements who are at the front lines of climate organizing. His stance on Palestine is horrific, a racist, Liberal Zionist lie straight out of the Oslo era, and is something that I would laugh out of any community organizing space I inhabit. It is also somehow the best stance of any candidate in the race. The fact of the matter is, Bernie Sanders has the most progressive platform of any candidate in the race. He has walked the walk, and talked the talk, on many of the justice issues I care about for a *very* long time. And he also deserves credit for nearly singlehandedly pushing the national discussion on domestic policy to the left for the past five years. Despite my reservations, and in the face of all the things about Bernie, his campaign, and many of his supporters that I find distasteful or alarming, I cannot deny his progressive chops, and his standing in this race as the only candidate who can summon the voter turnout to defeat Donald Trump in November.

This endorsement comes down to one ultimately deciding factor. As an organizer, and as an educator, when I am faced with a problem that I do not know how to solve, or a question that I cannot answer, I defer to my community, and the people that I trust. Those people, overwhelmingly, have chosen to support Bernie Sanders, and with this endorsement, I am choosing to believe that their collective belief in his candidacy is not misplaced.

Poppin' Progressives, Batman: US House of Representatives

Job Description:
Creates and approves legislation for the US House of Representatives, represents their districts on the national stage for fiscal and civil development purposes where appropriate.

There are a few of these races, and hoo mama are they spicy. The districts that Girl, I Guess is featuring are competitive races where insurgent candidates are seeking to knock out the Democratic incumbent, or oust a former nominee for the seat. It's Complicated™ but this guide is here to help. Break out your grouchiest scrolling fingers, and let's push the Overton Window in the House of Representatives as Left as we can get it!!

Illinois 1st Congressional District

The Candidates:
Bobby Rush (Incumbent)
Robert Emmons Jr.
Sarah Gad
Ameena Nuur Matthews

The Dish:
This is a hot race, with incumbent Bobby Rush seeking election to a 15th consecutive term in Congress. Rush, a former Black Panther and bigtime radical, has mellowed in recent years and become noticeably more moderate in his public associations, even endorsing noted Person Who Laughs About Locking Up Parents For Truancy Kamala Harris for President, and then switching to Michael "Got the Moves Like" Bloomberg when Harris dropped out. Rush is still one of the more progressive members of Congress overall, and his opposition to a bill that would criminalize the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement for Palestinian freedom was key in defeating that legislation. He also co-sponsored HR 2407, which condemned Israeli human rights abuses of Palestinian children. Rush has long been progressive-ish on Palestine, and that's been linked to his history as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, which is a big plus on the Girl, I Guess foreign policy metrics. However, Rush hasn't faced a serious electoral challenge since 2000, when Barack Obama got 30% of the vote against him, so he hasn't had to make his case to voters in 20 years. He could be vulnerable to a challenge, especially because he has a long history of missing *tons* of votes in Congress; during his current term, he was present for only 78% of votes in the House, less than the median House Democrat by 19%. He's also got a history of some corruption issues, which… is just so Chicago. Rush has genuine progressive bonafides, though, explicitly supporting Medicare for All, forgiving student loan debt, and addressing infrastructure and access to economic opportunity in his district.

With all respect to Sarah Gad, whose positions on the issues are quite progressive, she doesn't seem to be getting much attention, or have much chance, in the race. The same can be said about Ameena Nuur Matthews, although Matthews is worth a serious look. She's is a Black Muslim woman, and a former gang member who says Islam and the needs of her children took her off the streets, and got her started as a powerful violence provention advocate. Her platform reflects that history, with a strong focus on reducing gun violence, and promoting criminal justice reform, women's rights, ending the school-to-prison pipeline, and expanding access to mental health services. If you're not particularly taken with Rush or Emmons, Ameena Nuur Matthews is a perfectly acceptable "throw up your hands and vote for the clearly qualified woman who should be getting more attention" vote.

The big noise is around insurgent candidate **Robert Emmons, Jr**, who is running as a young progressive who can bring a new face to the district. Emmons, Jr is sporting endorsements from The People for Bernie (although not Sanders himself), the Sunrise Movement, and CrystalMama/That One Jewish Woman In Every Reform or Reconstructionist Synagogue Who Sells Essential Oils After Shabbat Services AKA Marianne Williamson. Emmons's platform talks all the progressive talk: Green New Deal, cancelling all student debt and free college for all, Medicare for All, and one couldn't be blamed for packing up shop and choosing Emmons as a vote for change. ~~Except.~~

~~Emmons proudly touts in his Sun Times candidate survey that he was the President of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's chapter of JStreet, and used his time on campus to advocate for a two-state solution for Palestine and the Israeli State. I view this as a coward's position, and one that seriously undermines Emmons's progressive credentials. The two-state solution is a racist fantasy, under which any Palestinian state would be wholly subservient to the Israeli economy and infrastructure, the basic freedoms of Palestinians would be denied, and Palestinians displaced in the *Nakba* would be thrown under the proverbial bus. It is an unacceptable position for a progressive to take, and a significant blemish. Now, to be fair, Bobby Rush has vocally supported a two-state solution for years, but he's also voted in the affirmative on significant pro-Palestine legislation, and I'd rather stick with that, than take my chances with someone who might be worse. If Robert Emmons, Jr wants to make public statements committing to oppose legislation that would criminalize BDS, and committing to support legislation that would condemn and potentially impose sanctions for, the Israeli abuse of Palestinian children in violation of interational law, this endorsement could change. But for now, I can't trust Emmons.~~

~~The 1st District needs change, and maybe a new Congressperson, but Robert Emmons, Jr ain't it. I'm giving a hearty Girl, I Guess to Bobby Rush, and hoping that his next challenger will run to his left on Palestine, too.~~

UPDATE:

The **Robert Emmons, Jr.** campaign contacted me to say that Emmons Jr's position on BDS and Palestine was different than what his position in J Street implies. He and I had a robust conversation about what membership in J Street often can mean for those in the Palestine solidarity movement, and he expressed to me that he has firm support for the Palestinian struggle, and he absolutely opposes the criminalization of BDS. Evidently he was one of those long-ago members of J Street who bought more into the pro-Palestine part than the pro-Israel part, and we spoke about how he had joined and left the organization in college before J Street's rightward turn, and recent identity crisis. He added a section to his website under his human rights platform to that effect, and this wholly resolves my previous issue with him. As I stated earlier, my inability to be sure that Emmons, Jr would vote against the criminalization of the BDS movement was the main reason for my endorsement of Bobby Rush. Now that that concern has been assuaged, I'm giving the endorsement to **Robert Emmons, Jr.** His positions on the Green New Deal, access to education, and Medicare for All are impressive, and now that his stance on Palestine is on his website and publicly available, I can say with confidence that his foreign policy on Palestine is, as well.

Illinois 2nd Congressional District

The Candidates:
Robin Kelly (Incumbent)
Marcus Lewis

The Dish:
This is an easy one. **Robin Kelly**, the incumbent, is a mainline Democrat who has held office since 2013. She doesn't have many progressive positions, although her stances on LGBTQ Justice are certainly progressive, and her other issue positions are pretty Standard Democrat. Her opponent, Marcus Lewis however, is… well, I'll let this answer on his favorite TV show from his Sun Times survey tell the story, "I don't allow the television to program my mind with its continual lies and foolishness it shows and promotes. I read the Holy Bible for my guidance in life. There is where the truth can be found for every issue and problem." Weirdly, he's to the left of Kelly on healthcare and student loan forgiveness, but WOW is this man salty. He believes **Robin Kelly** is a puppet for Michael Bloomberg, and that Bloomberg intervened in the 2013 special election to win it for Kelly. Which, to be fair, he did. But Kelly has won re-election three times since then, and Lewis has run for this seat *six times* since 2012, and has never gotten more than 18% of the vote. Get a different hobby, dude. Voters in the 2nd District can safely vote to re-elect **Robin Kelly.**

Illinois 3rd Congressional District

The Candidates:
Daniel Lipinski (Incumbent)
Rush Darwish
Charles Hughes
Marie Newman

The Dish:
Incumbent Dan Lipinski is one of the most conservative Democrats in Congress, and is a moldy gym sock of a man, with equally unpleasant politics. In 2018, Girl, I Guess endorsed Marie Newman, a progressive democrat, to take on Lipinski, and she barely lost. Now Newman is back for Marie 2: Electric Boogaloo, but she's got some company in the race. Rush Darwish, a Palestinian-American businessman and media personality, is also running to represent the district, which has the most Arab residents of any district in the state, and contains the largest Palestinian population in the country. Charles Hughes, potentially best described as Kevin from The Office Runs for Office, is also running for this seat, but he has no campaign website and his Sun Times candidate survey reads like Kevin, too.

Darwish, unsurprisingly, has far and away the best position on Palestine of the bunch. While his positions aren't easily located as a matter of the public record, his criticism of Newman for her flip-flop on BDS and her support of a two-state solution make it clear that his stance is to the left of a two-state proposal. Unfortunately, Darwish's other positions are notably less progressive: he supports Medicare for All Who Want It, increased criminalization on gun sales (laws which disproportionately impact Black and Brown people!), and doesn't have a specific student loan forgiveness plan. And while he has some interesting ideas around transportation (more L lines?? Say more, sir!), he's also got deep associations with Mayor Lori Lie-foot, which is a solid "hell nah" from me, and he simply doesn't rate as highly on the Girl, I Guess metrics overall.

Marie Newman is the Girl, I Guess endorsee for the 3rd, and she comes with a boatload of progressive qualifications, and one massive, significant disappointment. A 2018 flip-flop on her support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for Palestinian liberation, and her support of a two-state solution are a slap in the face to the massive Palestinian community that she's trying to represent. BDS is a nonviolent freedom movement that seeks basic rights and liberties for Palestinians which they are already granted under international law but are denied by the Israeli apartheid regime, and she also supports a two-state solution, which is unacceptable. The two-state solution is a racist fantasy, under which any Palestinian state would be wholly subservient to the Israeli economy and infrastructure, the basic freedoms of Palestinians would be denied, and Palestinians displaced in the Nakba would be thrown under the proverbial bus. Given the demographics of the district, it was extremely tempting to not endorse Newman on these grounds alone. Luckily for her, however, she came with some big-time help.

Along with progressive positions on healthcare, universal childcare, underemployment, and student loan forgiveness, **Marie Newman** has a smorgasbord of progressive endorsements. She's been endorsed by, among others, The Sunrise Movement, Justice Democrats, the Cook County College Teachers Union, Bernie Sanders *and* Elizabeth Warren (and Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Jay Inslee! Remember them?), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Alderpeople Byron Sigcho-Lopez, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, and Maria Hadden, Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison, State Rep Kelly Cassidy, and more. This is what we call a "holy shit,"moment

or a classic “too many endorsements from progressives that we care about for them to all be wrong despite Newman’s cowardice on Palestine” situation. If you’re in the 3rd, give a “Girl, I Guess” to **Marie Newman**.

Illinois 5th Congressional District

The Candidates:
Mike “Quiggles” Quigley (Incumbent)
Brian Burns

The Dish:
Since the very first time Girl, I Guess covered Congressional races, I’ve used this space to educate the public about my casual dislike for the Congressman who I have named “Quiggles”: Mike Quigley, the incumbent for the 5th District. This casual dislike stems entirely from when I co-organized the Trans Liberation Rally in March of 2017, and Quigley’s staff called to say the Congressman had invited himself to the rally… as a speaker. The organizers declined, and evidently Quiggles was decently salty about it for a while afterwards. Honestly, there’s plenty not to like about Quigley on paper, too: he’s a cishet man representing a district that includes Boystown, he’s not exactly progressive and has a center-left voting record, he’s voted for pro-cop bills in the past, and he’s mailing in this election so hard that his campaign website hasn’t been updated since 2018.

Quigley challenger Brian Burns seems a bit… strange. His website is bare-bones, and despite having plenty of room to Quigley’s left, and emphasizing his youth in candidate surveys, Burns seems to stake out a mix of centrist and progressive policies, such as calling for Medicare for All (but qualifying it by saying he’d support any improvement and calling himself a “pragmatist”), refusing to call for tuition-free public college of any kind, and punting on student loan forgiveness. He’s running partially on something he calls “Democracy 3.0” but doesn’t explain it beyond saying that we need to use technology to make government better which… ok, yeah, sure. At the end of the day, Burns is all over the place, but he seems to have a strong history of progressive connections with the National Lawyers Guild, he’s called for a federal minimum wage of $15 and an inflation increase, and he wants to end cash bail. Burns does, however, have a significant blemish on his record: a homophobic tweet from 2011 that was dug up during the race, and which he subsequently deleted. Burns has apologized for the tweet, in fairness, but this isn’t a cute look from a man trying to represent Boystown.

Ultimately, I’m giving a shrug and an endorsement to **Quiggles** because goddamn at least he had the sense to never be homophobic in public. Quigley is far from inspiring, but he can do the job.

Illinois 7th Congressional District

The Candidates:

Danny K. Davis (Incumbent)
Anthony Clark
Kina Collins
Kristine Schanbacher

The Dish:
Don't make me CHOOSE!!! This race breaks my heart, because it has two amazing candidates running against an entrenched incumbent, and that means that neither of them is likely to win. If Kina Collins and Anthony Clark both lived in different districts, I'd endorse them both without a second thought. But, alas, here we are, and Mama's gotta pick a favorite.

Kristine Schanbacher exists, too, but is vehemently pro-Israel and honestly, compared to Clark and Collins, is pretty meh. Danny Davis has held office since 1996, and is Fine™ but the winds of change are a-blowing, and this might be his greatest electoral challenge yet. Clark ran against him in 2018, took 25% of the vote, and is back for more. Collins has experience working with political campaigns (including a stint with Governor Pritzker's campaign that ended when she quit after JB's remarks on Black folks in a call with Rod Blagojevich became public, which takes some serious and impressive chutzpah) but has never run for office before.

Collins and Clark both have progressive positions on Medicare for All, cancelling student debt, criminal justice reform, a Green New Deal, justice for LGBTQ folks, gerrymandering, decriminalizing sex work, reparations, ending cash bail, and both are pro-Palestine and pro-BDS. Clark has been endorsed by Girl, I Guess favorite Rossana Rodriguez, as well as The People for Bernie, Chicago DSA, and a sex worker advocacy organization called The Desiree Alliance. Collins has been endorsed by Girl, I Guess favorite Jeanette Taylor, Good Kids Mad City, IL Youth Climate Strike, and the Center for Popular Democracy.

Honestly, this race is coming down to the minutiae for me. Despite being the 6th race covered in the Guide, this one is the last one I endorsed, because both Kina Collins and Anthony Clark are so fantastic that it pains me to pick between them. Each of their campaigns has reached out to me on social media to provide me with additional information about the candidates, and I kept waiting for something obvious or significant to differentiate the two, but their platforms are *extremely* similar. I was, however, eventually able to come to a decision.

Anthony Clark is an ideal candidate, and wowza do I wish he was running against incumbent 1st District Congressman Bobby Rush instead, because I think his strong history as an organizer, and his general ambiance and belief in the transformative power of people, would be a perfect foil to Rush's moderation and repeated absence. But alas, here we are, with him running a second time against Danny Davis, and still being a damn good candidate. His background as a public school special education teacher is an undeniable plus, and he's been through the fire and back, personally and professionally, for his organizing. After being targeted by racist graffiti on the high school campus at which he worked, Clark supported student-led efforts to fight back against racial injustice in their district, and used his own platform to boost their organizing.

Apparently he was a little *too* effective, because he was blamed and disciplined for independent student organizing later at the same school. Talk about badass!! I think Clark is the real deal, he's open and accessible, and always willing to talk about his views, and I trust him and his extremely thorough platform, which gets perfect marks on all the Girl, I Guess metrics.

Kina Collins is a powerful, Leftist, badass Black woman organizer who I fully believe would beat Danny Davis in a one-on-one election. She is connected, driven, and has a clear vision for the 7th District, the State, and the Country. Kina stands on her principles in the toughest of times, and is uncompromising in her commitment to her community, and to justice (seriously, quitting a clearly winning gubernatorial campaign over allegations of racism from 10 years prior is one of the most principled stands I've seen play out in public by a campaign worker in a *long* time). In private, or in direct communication, she's extremely willing to articulate her positions on issues, and those positions are sterling. I trust her judgement, and I would trust her as an elected official the same as I would trust her as a community organizer.

The one knock I can find is that her platform, while incredibly progressive and broad, is lighter on specifics than I would like, especially in comparison to Clark's. In correspondence with Kina's campaign, I had heard that she'd be releasing her full policy platform on February 3rd, through Politico, but as of 11:59pm on February 5th, the night before I publish this Guide, I couldn't find the full platform. And even when I was evaluating the two candidates, I found myself repeatedly comparing public statements from Clark's website to stances that I found in questionnaires that I had been sent by Collins's campaign. After hours of poring over candidate surveys, questionnaires, and their websites (which, by the way Anthony, please add a home button to your website, I'm begging you), I've decided that the only meaningful difference between them is the amount of information that is *publicly* available about each of their platforms, as of the time of the Guide's release.

Girl, I Guess has a long history of choosing between excellent candidates by comparing the detail in their public platforms, and there are many endorsements that this Guide has made, in current and past editions, based on that criteria. While there are things that can offset a thorough, progressive platform, such as significant strength of endorsements or candidate experience, that is not the case in this election. At the end of the day, Anthony Clark's public statements, and his public platform are far more specific than Kina Collins's, and I simply cannot weight statements made in documents not accessible to the public, or in private conversations between myself and the campaign, the same as I do public statements on a campaign website. On those grounds, I have to give my support, and the Girl, I Guess endorsement, to **Anthony Clark**, but I will not and cannot fault you for voting for Kina Collins if you'd like to do so.

Illinois 11th Congressional District

The Candidates:
Bill Foster

Rachel Ventura

The Dish:
The 11th District race pits long-term fancypants science man incumbent Bill Foster against **Rachel Ventura**, a Will County Board member with an unabashedly impressive platform. While Foster sports a long list of legislative accomplishments, and Important Smart People awards and endorsements, he also touts a center-left voting record, with positions on key issues that fall short of being progressive. Ventura, on the other hand, hits every Girl, I Guess metric squarely on the head. She wants a Constitutional Amendment to overturn Citizens United, she wants to expand protections in the Voting Rights act, and doesn't support free-trade deals. Ventura's tax policy and stances on raising the minimum wage and aiding labor are sterling. She supports decriminalizing marijuana on the federal level, wants to ban conversion therapy, and add gender identity and sexual orientation to federal non-discrimination statutes. Ventura's positions on criminal justice are also excellent: she wants to end mandatory minimums, extend voting rights to felons and the incarcerated, address police brutality with legislation that allows police to be charged with assault and murder when they, you know, assault and murder people, end for-profit prisons and detention centers, and expand protections for the undocumented. Not bad for a White mom from the suburbs!! Her positions on student loan forgiveness and Medicare for All are as good as you'd expect. And even on Palestine, her stances in favor of stopping Israeli abuses and brutality in Gaza and the West Bank are strong, and she even hints at being open to sanctions!! Need I say more? I'm blown away by the strength of **Rachel Ventura**'s platform, and am giving her an enthusiastic endorsement.

Illinois 13th Congressional District

The Candidates:
Betsy Dirksen Londrigan
Stefanie Smith

The Dish:
I spent the better part of 6 years in the 13th District, and South Central Illinois will always have a special place in my heart. That's one of many reasons why this race is deeply important to me. The winner of this primary will have the chance to take on Rodney Davis in the general election. Dirksen Londrigan gave it her best shot in 2018, actually having the election called for her at one point by some election night reporters, but eventually losing by just over 2000 votes to Davis. Normally, this would mean that Betsy should get another bite at this particular Congressional apple, but shockingly, she seems to have mailed it in a bit this time around. Her campaign website barely has any information on it (not even a roster of issues), and she's left herself vulnerable to a truly fantastic challenger from the Left. Also, let's be honest… Betsy is just plain boring. She's a regular old Democrat who is trying to get by on name recognition and nothing else, and to the discerning Girl, I Guess voter, that should make her Betsy Dirksen Yawn-drigan.

Stefanie Smith is a dynamic, progressive, and downright badass challenger, and gets a full-throated endorsement from Girl, I Guess as my choice to take on Rodney Davis in November. A former trailer park human and sex worker, and current disabled queer with experience in food service and genuine working class struggle, **Stefanie Smith** is a true reflection of the average constituent in the 13th District. Running on a platform of Leftist issues such as repealing the anti-sex worker FOSTA/SESTA legislation, an anti-war stance, and advocating for paid domestic violence leave to mainstream progressive stances like supporting universal healthcare, a Green New Deal, and tuition-free public universities, there's nothing not to like. And despite a sparsely populated campaign website, she's been active on her campaign Facebook page, doing weekly livestreams about her background, stances, and how she's running her race.

Speaking as someone intimately familiar with the 13th, Smith's working-class background, personal understanding of the most pressing issues facing the district, and no-nonsense, relatable campaign will resonate more with voters in the general election than Dirksen Londrigan's rehash of an already-run mainline Democratic campaign. IL-13 deserves a candidate that can make up for the district's history of having noted Iraq War Fraudster Donald Rumsfeld as a representative in the 60s (no, I am not making this up), and **Stefanie Smith** is that candidate. The primary for this district takes place during Spring Break for students in Champaign-Urbana, Bloomington-Normal, and Springfield, so if you're a student living in that district, get out and vote early!!!

Let's Kick Out Appointees! Illinois House of Representatives

Job Description:
Represent the interests of their constituents, write, and pass legislation. Approve a budget each year. Also apparently to run for re-election after getting appointed mid-term because of corruption or something. We know our state, y'all, there's some foolishness going on in some of these races.

IL House District 1

The Candidates:
Aaron Ortiz (Incumbent)
Alicia Elena Martinez

The Dish:
State House District 1 is home to incumbent **Aaron "Burkeslayer" Ortiz**, who in 2018 ousted the brother of Comic Book Villain, corrupt toadstool, and somehow still Alderman Ed Burke for this seat. Ortiz is a young Latino progressive who should hold onto this seat for as long as he wants, and comes to the table with stances on expanding Medicare for All in Illinois, ending

cash bail, and supporting public school teachers. His opponent, Alicia Elena Martinez, is a fake candidate who was clearly put up by Ed Burke to distract Ortiz from his race against Burke for 14ht Ward Committeeman. Martinez was active in Burke's ward organization, and her campaign features a sparse campaign Facebook, a noticeably vague website with conservative dog whistles about cash bail, and a petition filed at the last minute, on the last day of filing. Don't let Burke and his cronies continue to cheat residents of his Ward, and this district. Vote **Aaron Ortiz.**

IL House District 2

The Candidates:
Bobby Martinez Olson
Theresa Mah (Incumbent)
Kenneth Kozlar

The Dish:
The 2nd District race is a weird one, with incumbent **Theresa Mah**, who is the first Asian-American elected to the General Assembly, running against Kenneth Kozlar (perhaps a relative of 13th-place Mayoral race finisher, John Kenneth Kozlar??), who doesn't appear to be trying, and Bobby Martinez Olson, who seems like kind of a dick. He's heavily touting his multi-generation police family (eww), and his Fraternal Order of Police endorsement (EWW), and is doing a weird local jingoism thing by making a big deal out of his being the only candidate in the race born in Chicago, or Illinois. **Theresa Mah** is progressive, and she's a great representative for the district, so I recommend casting your vote for her.

IL House District 3

The Candidates:
Eva Dina Delgado (Incumbent)
Nidia Carranza

The Dish:
Incumbency doesn't mean much in the 3rd district race, where political appointee Eva Dina Delgado is squaring off against CTU member and activist **Nidia Carranza**. Delgado has been in office for less than three months, after she was contentiously appointed by a Party committee. The 3rd district seat was left vacant when former State Rep Luis Arroyo resigned in November, after being charged with bribery. Apparently he just straight-up offered a fellow state lawmaker a bribe in exchange for supporting legislation. You gotta love Chicago, right? Delgado was appointed by 30th Ward Alderman Ariel Reboyras by using his own votes, plus Arroyo's votes as a proxy, in a move which was opposed by unlikely allies Carlos Ramirez-Rosa and Michael Madigan. Now, none of this means that Delgado isn't qualified, but her history isn't great… she was a former assistant to the President of People's Gas (Girl, I Guess frowns on people with connections to bit utility companies), and served on Chicago's Police Board (which, as astute

observers of Chicago politics will know, does basically fuck all to hold police accountable in the city, and is largely seen as an enabling body). Delgado's platform is vague, but sounds ok.

Nidia Carranza on the other hand, sounds like a welcome progressive change for the district, and is running on a platform of rooting out corruption, strengthening schools and education in her district and the state, and fighting for Medicare for All in Illinois. She's picked up endorsements from 35th Ward Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, the United Working Families Party, the Chicago Teachers Union, and the Chicago Federation of Labor. **Nidia Carranza** is solid, progressive, and a deserving endorsee for the 3rd District.

IL House District 9

The Candidates:
Aaron Turner
Tyjuan Cratic
Lakesia Collins
Trina Mangrum
Maurice Edwards
Sandra Schneller
Nicole Harvey

The Dish:
The race to fill the seat being vacated by incumbent State Rep Arthur Turner, Jr looks like a complicated headache at first, but upon closer examination, the field largely clears itself. Aaron Turner, Maurice Edwards, and Nicole Harvey have absolutely no campaign information that I could find, anywhere, so that counts them out. Trina Magnum has only filled out a candidate survey for the Sun Times, but doesn't have any other materials out there. Sandra Schellner has a website with only two pages and little information, a campaign Facebook, and her campaign has only two donors… herself, and a relative. The two serious candidates for the seat are **Lakesia Collins** and Tyjuan "Ty" Cratic.

Cratic has a history of political campaign work and organizing, which he's banking on to help him in the race. His platform is… interesting, and light on substance, and he supports a 4-term limit for legislators, which I think is a no-go. He also thinks gerrymandering is… not a real issue? Also he said that his favorite TV show is Rick and Morty, which is just sad.

Collins, thankfully, is fantastic. She has endorsements from several SEIU bodies, CTU, CCCTU, the Chicago Federation of Labor, United Working Families, State Rep Will Guzzardi, Girl, I Guess endorsee and 25th Ward Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez, and more. **Lakesia Collins** is a leader in SEIU Healthcare Illinois and has used her union position to help pass progressive labor legislation. Her platform aims to lift the ban on rent control, get more resources into Black communities, expanded education access and an elected school board, Medicare for All, the

Fair Tax, and further minimum wage increases, including for tipped workers. This is an easy call; folks in the 9th District should vote for **Lakesia Collins.**

IL House District 10

The Candidates:
Gerard Moorer
Jawaharial Williams (Incumbent)
Gina Zuccaro

The Dish:
To get one out of the way quickly, Gina Zuccaro doesn't seem to be running a real campaign, and has no website, Facebook, Twitter, or campaign materials out whatsoever. So she's out of the running, proverbially and likely literally, as well. That leaves Gerard Moorer, who is employed as a Deputy District Director for Congressman Danny Davis in the 7th Congressional District, and current incumbent State Rep **Jawaharial Williams**. Honestly, this district is a nepotistic mess. Williams was appointed in May to fill the seat that was vacated by Meilssa Conyears-Ervin, who was elected City Treasurer. Williams is the son of 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, and former Cook County Commissioner Darlena Williams-Burnett, and he's a mentee of Illinois Secretary of State For Life, Jesse White. He was chosen over objections from Conyears-Ervin's husband, 28th Ward Alderman Jason Ervin, and 32nd Ward Alderman Scott Waugespack. Oy fucking vey. Williams here is the beneficiary of a weak challenger in Gerard Moorer, whose website and available candidate surveys are vague at best. Williams's website leaves much to be desired, offering almost no details about the candidate's platform, but a Sun Times survey reveals that he supports increased funding for education, especially MAP grants, the Fair Tax proposal, and a $15 minimum wage. In this district, I'd recommend holding my nose and voting for **Jawaharial Williams**, but my real endorsement goes to the hope of a stronger challenger in 2022, because this district deserves better choices.

IL House District 12

The Candidates:
Ryan Podges
Kimberly Walz
Margaret Croke
Jonathan "Yoni" Pizer
James Garfield
Marty Malone

The Dish:
This six-candidate pileup of a race features my favorite candidate name of the cycle so far: **Jonathan "Yoni" Pizer**, whose nickname "Yoni" is such a perfect combination of Jewish and sapphic nomenclature, and so fully in the spirit of Girl, I Guess, that I was tempted to endorsed

him on the spot for his name alone. But, alas, I have a process or whatever that I have to stay true to, so let's do some analysis!!

The 12th District is also showcasing another rarity in Chicago politics: an open election following an appointment! 26-year incumbent State Rep Sara Feigenholtz is being appointed to the State Senate following the retirement of Senate President John Cullerton. Apparently this was in the works publicly for some time, because a slew of candidates lined up to run for her seat, even while she was still the incumbent. I've gotta say, it's refreshing to see Feigenholtz make her transition to the State Senate without appointing some putz to her seat for like, two weeks or something, like other folks seem to do.

Let's knock out a couple of candidates right away. Marty Malone is quite proud of graduating from the horrifying-sounding Chicago Police Department's Citizen's Police Academy, so that's a no for me dawg. Kimberly Walz is endorsed by Gay Disgrace and Hater of Homeless People James Cappleman, and uses the words "transgendered" (incorrect since like 2008), and "transexual" (misspelled) on her website… *while talking about her work on the Gender Identity Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance!!!!* Bad pander is bad, and bad pander means no endorsement. Margaret Croke has a similar problem, where her platform is brief, and she touts on her website that she worked for Rahm Emanuel and Hillary Clinton, which is a pair of bad connections that I just can't get behind. Ryan Podges says that he supports efforts to legalize the use of marijuana in Illinois which… yeah, bud, so did the legislature, the governor, and the voters. Last year.

That leaves James Garfield (yes, absolutely the same person as the famously dead President who was assassinated in 1881), and **Yoni Pizer**. Garfield's platform is excellent, and specific, and it's clear that he talks the talk. He has strong stances on bail reform, expanding access to education, tax reform, and basically everything else. He's extremely thorough, and it leaves me wondering why he hasn't pulled in any endorsements, which a quality candidate in a race this large usually does. **Yoni Pizer**, on the other hand, is endorsed by basically everyone gay except Cappleman, including a couple folks that I'm solidly not a fan of in Lori Lightfoot and 44th Ward Alderman Tom Tunney. His platform is less specific than Garfield's, and is missing positions on a few key issues of importance, although he is endorsed by individuals who I trust on those issues. This is a tough one for me. On strength of platform alone, Garfield is a clear choice, but in the full picture, Pizer becomes an excellent option, as well. What this comes down to, for me, is Garfield's stance on legislative term limits. While both candidates support term limits for legislative leadership, I believe Garfield is overcompensating by being adamant in his support for general term limits. A big plank on his platform is called Reform First, which he launched in the wake of the latest scummery by Electoral Lich Michael Madigan. But I believe, and Pizer actually explicitly says in a candidate survey, that term limits for all legislators are shortsighted; they prevent long-term legislative change, and actually vest *more* power in lobbyists, who are allowed to stick around longer than the legislators. For that reason, I'm going to go with **Jonathan "Yoni" Pizer** for the Girl, I Guess endorsement, but if you want to vote for James Garfield instead, I can't fault you.

IL House District 16

The Candidates:
Yehiel Kalish (Incumbent)
Denyse Wang Stoneback
Kevin Olickal

The Dish:
The 16th is a three-way race between incumbent and yet-another-appointee Yehiel Kalish, who is the first Rabbi to serve in the General Assembly and challengers Kevin Olickal and **Denyse Wang Stoneback**. Kalish was appointed after gaining the support of his predecessor, Lou Lang, and promising to share his progressive values on a number of issues, which ended great for everyone involved, and Kalish has done exactly that.

Lmao nah, that's the opposite of what happened!! Six months after elevating Kalish from lobbyist to the State House, Lang has withdrawn his support, is openly opposing Kalish's re-election, and is backing **Denyse Wang Stonebeck** instead. The reason? Kalish was one of 10 Democrats to vote against, or "present" (Kalish voted the latter) on the Reproductive Health Act, a sweeping piece of abortion rights legislation, meant to be Illinois's answer to the restrictive bills being passed in red states. Kalish claimed that his "Orthodox Jewish values" compelled him to vote "present" on the bill, but that's some serious garbage, because according to Jewish law, abortions are totally 100% fine, and Kalish is just looking for an excuse to be wishy-washy. I'm disappointed in him as someone who believes unequivocally of the right of anyone to obtain an abortion at will, on demand, and also as a Jew whose Jewish values back up that belief.

That leaves Olickal and Wang Stoneback, and they both present a very progressive option. Olickal is supporting some robust ethics reforms, lowering property taxes by restructuring how schools are funded, protecting reproductive healthcare and choice, capping insulin and drug prices and a public healthcare option, lifting the ban on rent control, ending cash bail, and ending the punitive aspects of evictions and housing background checks. WOW that's a lot of good positions. Wang Stonebeck matches that with largely similar ethics positions, a strong pro-choice record, an elected school board and full funding for schools, TIF reform and the Fair Tax, universal healthcare, re-opening the mental health centers, increasing funding for DCFS, and expanding services and access for disabled folks. WOW, that's ALSO a lot of good positions. Olickal is much stronger on housing, and has a specific position on cash bail; Wang Stonebeck is better on Chicago issues like TIFs and the mental health clinics, and social services for children in the system and disabled folks. Where Wang Stonebeck wins against Olickal, for me, is in endorsements. Yes, Olickal is endorsed by Person I Like And Trust Andre Vasquez, and organizations like Our Revolution Illinois, The People's Lobby, and former County Clerk David Orr. But… Wang Stonebeck is endorsed by the CTU, the CCCTU, former State Senator and Gubernatorial candidate Daniel Biss, MWRD Commissioners Deb Shore and Cam

Davis, and a slew of community activists, some of whom I know personally, and whose opinions I trust a lot. Like, a LOT a lot. For that reason, I'm giving my nod to **Denyse Wang Stonebeck**, but Kevin Olickal is also amazing, and deserving of your vote if you choose to give it to him.

IL House District 19

The Candidates:
Lindsey LaPointe (Incumbent)
Joe Duplechin
Patricia Vasquez Bonnin

The Dish:
So Joe Duplechin is a cop, which means that we're not even going to consider him. But he's doing better than his ill-fated Aldermanic run, because at least he's got a website this time. Also he has only one chin, so I'm both disappointed, and unamused. That leaves us with the incumbent, **Lindsey LaPointe**, who is, you guessed it, an appointee to the State House, and Patricia Vasquez Bonnin, a successful comedian and media personality (she also sought the appointment in May, but was unsuccessful). LaPointe and Vasquez Bonnin have relatively similar platforms, with both advocating healthcare expansion, more resources for schools, and "taking care of first responders" (we all know what that means… ugh). Vasquez Bonnin has some good specifics in her platform and public surveys about changing the ways in which schools are allocated funding (she wants to move away from a property-tax based system, which is good because that system is racist and it sucks!!), and improving statewide services for disabled people (which is also good because Illinois has a really terrible record in making services accessible for disabled folks, which impacts a lot of people that I love). LaPointe is sporting endorsements from SEIU, the CTU, Senator Dick Durbin, and Rep. Mike "Quiggles" Quigley. Vasquez Bonnin, on the other hand, is endorsed by the Hispanic American Labor Council, and Illinois Comptroller and Person Who Runs For Two Offices At Once Susana Mendoza. ~~I like the specifics in Patricia Vasquez Bonnin's campaign, while I'm not a big fan of Mendoza, and I am absolutely a fan of the CTU, there's something that strikes me as *off* about LaPointe's vagueness. I've seen my fair share of vague platforms, and the wording in hers comes off to me as talking the good talk, but not promising anything she can be held to too firmly. For these reasons, and because Vasquez Bonnin is paying well-deserved attention to disabled folks, the Girl, I Guess shrug is going to Patricia Vasquez Bonnin.~~

UPDATE:
After the initial publication, I was contacted by LaPointe's campaign with some additional information. Apparently the language on her website is currently under construction (my least favorite thing!), and her positions are being updated soon. They sent me legislation that shows that LaPointe has signed onto the charter school moratorium, she supports lifting the ban on rent control, and the repeal of parental notification of abortion, which is a very progressive pro-choice bill. These are some of the specifics that I was looking for, and in my mind, these

stances put her past Vasquez-Bonnin. In light of the new information, I'm changing my endorsement to **Lindsey LaPointe.**

IL House District 31

The Candidates:
Mary E. Flowers (Incumbent)
Samantha Simpson

The Dish:
If I'm ever asked about incumbent complacency, this will be the race that I reference. State Rep Mary Flowers has been in this seat since 1985. Yes, for *thirty-five years.* She's not even trying in her re-election campaign; she has no campaign website, no social media at all, and honestly, I can't blame her. If you've been re-elected eighteen times in a row and barely ever had anyone run against you, getting comfortable must be pretty easy. **Samantha Simpson**, however, might be enough to put the fear of electoral Jesus into Flowers. Simpson was born and raised in Chicago, and has a ridiculously impressive resume, starting off as an intern for Barack OBama back in 2006, and then moving to Ohio to tear shit up with the State Party in the attorney general's office, and finally spending six years in a senior role at the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau. She wants to increase access to financial aid for students, is pushing Solar For All as a green energy alternative, and increasing early childhood education in the state. She's a long shot, but I'm supporting change for the district and endorsing **Samantha Simpson**, in no small part because I think Flowers should at least be putting up a token resistance, even if she's sure she's going to win.

IL House District 40

Candidates:
Jamie Andrade, Jr (Incumbent)
Syamala Krishnamsetty

The Dish:
This race was difficult to research… so difficult that I accidentally missed it the first time around! That's because neither of the candidates have much information out there about them. For incumbent Andrade, Jr, there is ~~no campaign website~~ apparently, according to his campaign, which contacted me, a campaign website. So I looked for it again, and it doesn't show up until the *fifth page of Google results*, which means it essentially doesn't exist, and the only information I could easily find about his views were in his Sun Times survey. **Syamala Krishnamsetty** has the same problem; although she technically has a website, it has almost no content on it, and her Sun Times survey was the only context for her views that I had. But after a little digging, I found all I needed to know pretty quickly. Andrade, Jr was a former aide to machine alderman Dick Mell, and was appointed to this seat in 2013 when former 33rd Ward Alderwoman, defiler of bowties, and disgrace to dykes Deb Mell was appointed to Dick's

aldermanic post when he retired. He's also vehemently called for more policing, which is super gross (through a petition, too… yikes, man, you're an elected official). The Mell Machine was run out of City Council by Girl, I Guess favorite and Alder-bae Rossana Rodriguez in 2019, and I think it's about time to get rid of the last vestiges of this dynasty. Despite there not being a ton of information out there about Krishnamsetty, her Sun Times survey stakes out some quite progressive positions, including support for allowing felons to vote, ending cash bail, expanding affordable housing, the Fair Tax, and supporting public schools. The Mells had their chance, and Andrade, Jr is clearly a crony, and less progresisve than Krishnamsetty anyway. He has some progressive endorsements, which mildly baffle me given his connections, but none of them are going to override his Mell ties. #KickDick and vote for **Syamala Krishnamsetty**!

Illinois State Senate

Job Description: Represent the interests of their constituents, write, and pass legislation. Approve a budget each year. A lot like the regular Senate, except super different, and instead of Chuck Schumer's eternally descending glasses and moral character, we just have some occasional run-of-the-mill corruption.

IL Senate District 1

The Candidates:
Antonio Munoz (Incumbent)
Froylan Jimenez

The Dish:
This race is pitting former cop and current 20-year incumbent Antonio Munoz against CTU member and activist **Froylan Jimenez**. This is a heavily Latinx district, which was previously represented by current Congressman and Mustache Machine Daddy Jesus "Chuy" Garcia in the 90s. Munoz won election in 1998, and has rarely been challenged since, even in general elections. Munoz is ok, I suppose, and he does have a long and strong record on the elected School Board, supporting the rights of undocumented students, and expanding Medicaid access. He's got a bunch of union endorsements, but a closer look at those endorsements and his donors reveals a troubling trend, which Jimenez has called out, accusing Munoz of corruption. And Jimenez might have a point… if you check Munoz's Illinois Sunshine page (Illinois Sunshine is an amazing nonprofit which serves as an election finance watchdog for Illinois state and municipal races), things get really weird, really fast. Sprinkled between all of his union donations are SERIOUS chunks of change from utilities and tech companies. People's Gas, Davita (the chain dialysis people), Verizon, T-Mobile, Johnson and Johnson, even fucking AMAZON is giving him money. Something's rotten in the 1st District.

Froylan Jimenez is a CPS teacher and community worker, whose platform is pretty progressive. His campaign website is lacking a lot of details, but his candidate surveys and social media pick up some of that slack. He's running on supporting a fair income tax, cutting wasteful spending like the Cook County Forest Preserve Police (Those exist??? #DefundTreeCops), shoring up public education and access, and fighting corruption. He says he wants to hire more CPD officers to replace retiring ones (gross), and he's in favor of legislative term limits, which Girl, I Guess opposes (term-limiting legislators doesn't actually help fight corruption, because it also prevents longer-term solutions from being approached legislatively, and guts institutional knowledge, which then is owned by lobbyists. California has had struggles with both these things since term-limiting state legislators), but hey, at least he's not taking money from Amazon. If you're in the 1st, vote for **Froylan Jimenez.**

UPDATE:
Since the initial publication, I've been contacted by a number of people expressing concerns about Froylan Jimenez. Apparently, he didn't get involved in the CTU until it was clear that there was going to be a strike, and allegedly, he's a real asshole. None of the allegations were particularly heinous, but they back up my hunch that there's something not-exactly-progressive about Jimenez. That being said, Munoz is so wretched that I can't possibly endorse him, so I'm keeping **Froylan Jimenez** as my endorsee, but for those in his district, keep in mind that he might need to be held accountable.

IL Senate District 10

The Candidates:
Robert Martwick (Incumbent)
Daniel O'Toole

The Dish:
Another incredibly cut-and-dry race, with only the illusion of competition. Incumbent **Robert Martwick** was appointed in June of 2019 to the seat formerly held by John Mulroe, who became a judge. He's a chief sponsor of the Fair Tax resolution that led to the Ballot Measure we'll be voting on in November, and he supports an elected School Board in Chicago. His opponent, Daniel O'Toole is a cop with CPD, and isn't running a real campaign. A state-sponsored racist, *and* a slacker. Not a great look. Horrifyingly, O'Toole isn't just your regular, everyday cop. According to the Citizens Police Data Project, he's got *FIFTY FIVE* civilian allegations against him during his time at CPD, more than 99.2% of other officers, and 10 Use of Force Reports, more than 83% of other officers in CPD. So not only are pigs not kosher, this one is downright rancid. Vote for **Robert Martwick**.

IL Senate District 13

The Candidates:
Robert Peters (Incumbent)

Ken Thomas

The Dish:
On the surface, this race seems incredibly close. Incumbent **Robert Peters** was appointed to the seat in January of 2019 after Kwame Raoul was sworn in as Attorney General. Residents of the District complained, saying they wanted an election, but the appointment process was mandated by law. Raoul himself was an appointee, installed in the seat previously held by Barack Obama. Ken Thomas is challenging Peters for the seat, and bringing an impressive resume to the fight, with experience in tenant advocacy, and support for ending cash bail, and strong positions on environmental justice.

Peters, for his part, is bringing similarly strong positions to the table, with a proven record on bail reform, protecting the district and the lakefront, and getting an elected school board for Chicago. What really puts **Robert Peters** over the top, though, is his stellar record as a legislator, and someone who can get things done for his district. He was chief co-sponsor of 13 bills, all of which were passed and signed into law, and some of these bills were big ones, including the bills that banned private detention centers in Illinois, expanded HIV preventative treatment to minors without seeking parental consent, expanding SNAP benefits to students, and a slew of additional legislation that expanded oversight of DCFS and the rights of kids in the system. I don't see any reason to replace a legislator with such a strong progressive record, so I'm suggesting folks living in the 13th District vote for **Robert Peters**.

UPDATE:
After looking through his financial disclosures, Ken Thomas looks like one of those candidates that just gets worse and worse, the more you find out about them. He's received donations from Chris Kennedy, and is linked to many of the Illinois Kennedys (who longtime readers of the Guide will know I have a particular distaste for), and failed 10th Ward Aldermanic Candidate Bobby Loncar. Now, Loncar might seem like a strange person to look sideways at, but those familiar with the Southeast Side of Chicago know Loncar as the Eviction King of the Southeast Side. A weird association a candidate running partially on his record as a housing justice activist. I don't trust this, and the association makes me not trust Thomas. In light of this new information, I'm strengthening my endorsement of **Robert Peters**.

Save Bail Reform!! Cook County State's Attorney

Job Description: The Cook County State's Attorney oversees one of the largest prosecutor offices in the nation, second only to Los Angeles County. It employs more than 1,500 personnel, including almost 900 attorneys. This is a big job, and has far-reaching implications. Not only does the State's Attorney do regular prosecutorial things, like, you know, prosecuting crimes,

they also *decide what things count as crimes that they want to prosecute*, and sets the standard for how folks are detained pre-trial. This means that the office has the power to enact bail reforms like refusing to require a cash bail for non-violent offenders. Yes, at the end of the day, the State's Attorney is a glorified cop, and cops are bad. But this office has the power to enact important progressive reforms with the right person at the helm.

Other duties of the office include: handling cases involving minors, and taking action against parents who abuse or neglect their kids; handling and prosecuting corruption cases; prosecuting fraudster, violent, or killer cops; providing paralegals, law clerks, law librarians and court reporters; overseeing narcotics courtrooms and drug treatment programs; and managing victim assistance and community justice programs.

The Candidates:
Kim Foxx (Incumbent)
Bill Conway
Bob Fioretti
Donna More

The Dish:
The State's Attorney race is *THE* most important race on our ballot this March, and I'm not even close to kidding when I say that. **Kim Foxx**, the incumbent, has come under heavy, racist fire from pro-cop forces within the city for her handling of several high-profile cases including the completely irrelevant Jussie Smollett case, and her strong stances on bail reform. Her progressive positions have been supported by Black and Brown organizers in the city, and we need to make sure that she stays in office so that there isn't a major step back in bail reform, and an even worse carte-blanche attitude towards the White Supremacist abuses of CPD. Foxx isn't perfect, but she's the best that we've got in Chicago, and her candidacy was backed by a powerful coalition of activists during the #ByeAnita campaign. She's also got the endorsements of Governor JB Pritzker, both sitting US Senators from Illinois, Members of Congress Schakowsky, Rush, Davis, and Kelly, our One True Mayor Toni Preckwinkle… and also Lori Lightfoot if you're a fan of her.

Her main opponent in the race is Extremely White Man and son of a billionaire war profiteer, Bill Conway. His father, William E Conway, Jr, has contributed almost $5 million to his campaign, more than 88% of his total funds raised. And his total campaign contributions? $11.5 million overall, nearly $10.8 million of which come from daddy's company. Billy Boy isn't the most qualified candidate for the job, so he's cozying up to cops, opposing bail reform, and touting his service as a Naval Intelligence Officer in the Middle East (a fancy way to say "probably did a war crime or two"). He's running a good, old-fashioned Grins and Gobs of Cash campaign, which Girl, I Guess is not a fan of. The real reason that he's doing well enough to merit attention is his rich daddy, who has bankrolled him into the spotlight, and justice isn't for sale in Cook County. Conway is truly horrific, so much so that there's an entire campaign devoted to getting him the fuck out of this race. If you're not gonna take my word for it, check out the #CancelConway

campaign's website. He's seriously bad news, is basically a Mega Racist, and Cook County cannot have him as our State's Attorney.

Just so I'm being thorough, I'll talk about the other candidates for the position: Bob Fioretti is a Donald Trump hair model, a perennial candidate since he left City Council in 2015, and is pro-cop, so we don't like him or care about him. Donna More is an Amy Klobuchar lookalike who decided that she'd try to unseat a progressive Black woman and advocate for more freedoms for police. We'd like to see less from More.

I cannot say this strongly enough, **VOTE FOR KIM FOXX!!!!**

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County

Job Description: The Clerk of the Circuit Court is, by law, the official keeper of records for all judicial matters brought into the Circuit Court of Cook County. The Clerk's Office serves the 5.2 million citizens of Cook County, more than 400 judges and maintains offices in Chicago, Skokie, Rolling Meadows, Maywood, Bridgeview and Markham.

The race is on to determine who will replace the notoriously, hilariously, gobsmackingly corrupt Dorothy Brown as Circuit Clerk, and this one is going to get interesting. Public trust in the office is extremely low, the new Circuit Clerk will inherit an office rife with corruption and a culture of patronage, and Brown was infamously dogged by scandals going as far back as 2006. Can the new Circuit Clerk repair the image and practices of the office after 20 years under Dorothy the Scammer? Only time will tell!

The Candidates:
Richard Boykin
Michael Cabonargi
Iris Martinez
Jacob Meister

The Dish:
This is a bit of a weird one, and that's to be expected given the circumstances. All four candidates are running on platforms of rooting out and preventing corruption, modernization, and making the Clerk's office more efficient. Which, good, they really should be doing all of those things. This is really going to come down to who the public can most trust to really turn the office around. So let's review the candidates!!

Jacob Meister is interesting, and potentially the most truly independent candidate in the race, which is a big plus. He's run before, finishing third in 2016, and garnered the endorsements of

the Sun Times, Tribune, and the Daily Herald, which is impressive. Meister has been a practicing attorney in the city for 29 years, and founded a civil rights law nonprofit, The Civil Rights Agenda, which fights in court for LGBTQ people. In 2008, he ran as the first openly gay candidate for the US Senate. Overall, Meister is a pretty cool dude, and Girl, I Guess stans a White cis gay man who actually gives back to the community as a whole. Meister also wants to eliminate the Circuit Clerk as an elected position, instead having the job be appointed by the Circuit Judges.

Iris Martinez is the sitting State Senator for the 20th District, and an Assistant Majority Leader of the Democratic Caucus. She's the first Latina to be elected to the Illinois State Senate, and she's got a pretty progressive record there, but it's super unclear why she actually wants to be Circuit Clerk. She's already an influential State Senator, and if she were to win, this office would be a big step down in importance, visibility, and fundamentally change the kind of job that she'd be doing. Honestly, while I like Martinez as a State Senator, I don't think she's as "independent" as she claims to be. If you want to make a move, girl, just run for Congress when Quiggles gets tired of doing the job.

Michael Carbonargi is a similar situation. He's the current Vice Chair of the State Democratic Party, and the current Chair of the Cook County Board of Review. That's pretty much the opposite of independent, and makes me feel some type of way about his trying to be Circuit Clerk. He's got good ideas about how to expedite the cannabis conviction expungement process, which is worth something. Admittedly, Carbonargi has a strong history on ethics reform, having taken that up as one of his primary roles on the Board of Review.

Richard Boykin represents yet another consummate political insider with no clear reason to run for the post, aside from the clout of cleaning up the Circuit Clerk's office. A former one-term Cook County Commissioner, who literally lists the owner of the White Sox and Bulls as a professional reference (how's that for an inside man!), Boykin's website talks more about the importance of the Circuit Clerk's office, and Boykin's work as an activist and former County Commissioner than it does about his actual plans for his potential Clerkship. Again, another impressive individual who I just don't want anywhere near a job that's had a bit too much of an insider's touch for the past 20 years.

The Girl, I Guess shrug is going to **Jacob Meister**, whose solid plans, history of legal activism, and outsider status relative to the rest of the field make him a more attractive choice to root out the corruption that's been part of the Circuit Clerk's office since the turn of the Millennium. As the old adage goes, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." This office is so broke, we figure we may as well let Meister take a hammer to it.

Dems and Taxes: Cook County Board of Review Commissioner

Job Description: The Cook County Board of Review is probably the most important super-ignored elected agency in Cook County (sorry, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District). They're the body that reviews appeals to property taxes in the County, which as well all know, can often be ridiculous. The person who wins this election will be taking on Dan Patlak, the lone Republican left on the Board of Review.

District 1

The Candidates:
Abdelnasser Rashid
Tammy Wendt

The Dish:
This one is also pretty easy. Tammy Wendt is… well… god awful. Her only notable endorsements are literally from the Fraternal Order of Police (which, why are they endorsing in a County Board of Review election in the first place???), who are a White Supremacist gang, and a blatantly racist organization. She also looks like someone who would call the cops on Black people for coming into her office. Tax Review Tammy? We don't think so.

Abdelnasser Rashid, on the other hand, is bae. He's a Palestinian-American progressive who came within 1500 votes of knocking off Former Cook County GOP Chairman Sean Morrison of the 17th District seat on the County Board in 2018, all while campaigning for Girl, I Guess's favorite nerd, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi. We'd go over his platform, but he's endorsed by basically every elected Democrat in his District, and isn't a horrible racist White woman, so he's getting our choice anyway. Feel free to check out his Sun Times candidate survey, which gives a good look at his positions (which are great!), if you'd like. If you're in District 1 of the Board of Review, vote for **Abdelnasser Rashid**

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioners

The What Now?
The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) oversees water-based infrastructure for the Cook County region. The Commissioners are responsible for safeguarding our waterways, treating wastewater, and preventing flooding and contamination. It seems like this weird niche little governing body, but it's important! The MWRD is in charge of the Stickney Plant which is

the largest water facility treatment center in the world. It controls 9,500 acres of land in Cook County, mostly alongside waterways and reservoirs. And they lease out a lot of that land, sometimes to polluters like oil refineries, asphalt plants, and antifreeze manufacturers. Which seems … troubling! And yes, sometimes those polluters pollute! Into our waterways! That we use to drink and bathe and do aquatic things!! So there is some feeling that the people in charge aren't actually doing a great job of protecting our water.

Other troubling things about the MWRD: they're known for corruption, trafficking in clout, lacking transparency, and other generally Bad Behavior. And that's not great when they also control a lot of taxpayer money.

How does it work?
There are 9 elected commissioners on the MWRD board. They serve 6-year terms but those terms are staggered. Three commissioners get elected (or re-elected) every two years. For the Democratic primary, you'll get to choose up to three candidates. The Republican primary for this race was cancelled this year (lol yes, really), so some of the Republicans are running as Democrats.

The Candidates:
Frank Avila (Incumbent)
Cam Davis (Incumbent)
Kimberly Neely Dubuclet (Incumbent)
Heather Boyle
Mike Cashman
Eira Corral Sepulveda
Deyon Dean
Patricia Theresa Flynn
Michael Grace
Shundar Lin

The Dish:
Oy vey, this race is always a hot mess, simply because of the number of candidates involved, and all the nuances between them. We're going to start by knocking out Shundar Lin, who has run several times before for MWRD… as a Republican. Sorry Shundar, but we aren't falling for your lil primary skidoo.

Mike Cashman is committing what has quickly become a cardinal sin of this cycle: having a Shamrock Green campaign website. Yes, I know the primary is on St. Patrick's Day (by the way, whose horrible idea was that???), but COME ON. He's a high school teacher, and according to his Sun Times survey (some of the only info available on him), a big believer in public education and outreach.

Deyon Dean is running on a platform of taking on lead poisoning in Chicago, and reducing the cost of poor folks' water bills, which sounds amazing… until you take a closer look at his history. He's currently the CEO of a security company, which is fine whatever, but he also used to be Mayor of the Village of Riverdale from 2008-2013 (#ArchieForMWRD). While he was Mayor, he was appointed to a position in the State DHS by then-Governor Rod Blagojevich, and apparently conducted extensive personal and Village of Riverdale business on state time. He was investigated by the State for doing this, which is technically a serious offense, and the findings were so bad that he was fired by the state and resigned as Riverdale Mayor in 2012. Sooooo… maybe not the best history of judgement for someone who wants a seat on a notoriously corrupt County elected body.

Heather Boyle is a Des Plaines city worker who is running a mostly Facebook-driven campaign for MWRD. This makes it hard to find information about her positions, but what I was able to find are troubling connections to politicians like 41st Ward Alderman Anthony Napolitano, and Board of Review Candidate Tammy Wendt who have a history of police association and grossness. Not exactly an appealing quality in anyone, let alone an elected bureaucrat.

Michael Grace is the Vice President Trustee of the South Lyons Township Sanitary District, where he's apparently done a pretty good job modernizing an old sewer system in South Lyons. He also strikes me as a Total Dad™, and his campaign website prominently features a football watch party event. Grace has an eclectic mix of endorsements, ranging from the Italian American Political Coalition to the entire 19th Ward (does he mean the IPO?? Do they HAVE an IPO?? Who knows. Google knows. Apparently they don't.) and he features a Johnny Cash festival on his Facebook. Charming, but will it be enough to get him this seat?

Patricia Theresa Flynn is a third-term Trustee of the Village of Crestwood and.... That's kinda all I can find out about her qualifications? There's not much information out there about her candidacy, but she's still managed to rack up some pretty impressive union endorsements, from a Bricklayers local, a Plumbers local, an IBEW local, and the Chicago Federation of Labor. Not bad for a candidate with no website and unclear qualifications. But it does make me nervous that her clear connections to labor might lead to some of the problems we've seen with patronage and clout bidding at the MWRD.

Eira Corral Sepulveda is yet another local elected official, this time the Clerk of Hanover Park, with lots of local experience and looking to get into the water game. But Eira Corral Sepulveda is different from the other candidates in a unique way: she's *hella* connected. Seriously, she's worked on campaigns for Tammy Duckworth, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Cristina Castro, and Kevin Morrison, and her campaign Facebook page features a cover photo depicting her with Chuy Garcia. She's been endorsed by current MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita, and scored the Cook County Democratic Party endorsement for MWRD. Corral Sepulveda is clearly smart, connected, and on track to do very well in the election. One thing that strikes me as strange though is the nature of those qualifications… the MWRD is usually a place where people with PhDs or extensive experience in infrastructure run for office. Corral Sepulveda's resume and

political connections sound more like someone who is running for Congress or the General Assembly than a candidate for an MWRD seat, and MWRD isn't usually a place that someone goes to move up in politics (for context, former Cook County Board President Todd Stroger was running, before failing to get on the ballot). But hey, who am I to complain about an overqualified Millennial wanting to become an elected bureaucrat and take care of our County's water. There are a couple of concerning signs about her candidacy, though… her campaign Facebook page was only created on the 20th of January, her Twitter only dates back to January 11th, and her campaign website (which was pending WhoIs verification at the time of this writing) was created on the 14th. That's a pretty quick turnaround, and it throws up a red flag for me that someone with this many connections was able to get on the ballot with seemingly zero campaign material.

Then we get to the incumbents, Frank Avila, Cam Davis, and Kimberly Neely Dubuclet. Davis and Dubuclet are both endorsed by everyone under the sun, but apparently the party is trying to get rid of Avila, because he doesn't seem to be sporting any endorsements, and the Cook County Dems have replaced him with Corral Sepulveda on their slate. After doing some digging, I discovered that the move was actually spearheaded by the County Party's Latino Caucus. Something smells rotten here, and I'm not a fan of County Democratic Party bullshit. Avila is the Finance Chair of the MWRD, and he's also in the habit of posting adorable photos with his wife on his campaign Facebook page. **Frank Avila, Cam Davis,** and **Kimberly Neely Dubuclet** are getting my endorsement for the primary, and we'll see what the Greens have to offer in November, when they often run serious candidates for the MWRD!

UPDATE:
Whoof, well, I guess the folks running for MWRD read the Guide. Since the initial publication, I've received a number of very long, but very kind, emails and messages from the folks in Eira Corral Sepulveda's camp, encouraging me to give her a second look. Frank Avila… followed me on Twitter, which is fun, and I'm sure I'll get some quality Water Nerd content the four times per year that I actually use Twitter. I will say, my *sole* concerns about Corral Sepulveda's candidacy are the Chuy links, and the intra-party machinations, neither of which were completely assuaged in any of the correspondence. I understand Democrats Gotta Democrat, and what fun is a machine party without a few backroom deals, but that doesn't quite cut it for me. BUT. What I will say is that **Eira Corral Sepulveda** is qualified, and if she's truly a Chuy pawn, we could do a lot worse. I'm going to continue to look into this, and see if I can get an idea of why **Frank Avila** didn't get the endorsement and she did, but for now, I'm moving my third seat endorsement to an **UNDER REVIEW** status. I'm not pulling my endorsement of **Frank Avila**, because he is qualified, and his ugly sweater game is strong, but I'm co-endorsing **Eira Corral Sepulveda** until I can get some more clarity on the issue of the Party endorsement.

UPDATE TO THE UPDATE:
Yeesh, y'all. I have talked to damn near 50 people about this race, including Frank Avila and a number of folks close to **Eira Corral Sepulveda** (not for lack of trying, but Millennial Opposite Calendar Life has got the better of us so far). And so far, I'm still wildly confused, and I don't really know who or what to believe as far as what the *real* story behind the County Party

endorsement is. At the end of the day, though, there has been a near consensus that **Eira Corral Sepulveda** is legit, and is actually the person that her record says she is, and despite a healthy amount of concern among many of the folks I talked to about Chuy Garcia's increasing influence, people were equally skeptical of Frank Avila. Honestly, I'm throwing up my hands, and making a judgement call on this one. Based on all the conversations that I've had, my gut is currently telling me that Corral Sepulveda isn't the kind of person that will peddle influence with Chuy, or completely sell out to the Mustache Machine, so I'm giving my Final, Definitely Not Changing This Again No Matter What, Apparently This Guide Has a Weird Amount of Influence in MWRD Races, Endorsement to **Eira Corral Sepulveda** and hoping that she proves me right.

Law and Order Dun Dun Sound Judicial Vacancies

~~In the past, for our guides, Ellen and I relied on the much smarter than us folks over at Injustice Watch and their wonderful voting guide specifically about judges in Cook County. This resource is truly a blessing, because the Injustice Watch folks comb through every court case and Bar Association ratings list, and really give us the tea on all the judicial candidates. And while I like to think of myself as an able evaluator and shade-thrower when it comes to other elected offices, I know when I'm in over my head. And, dear reader, with 34 judicial elections on the ballot across the county, and most of those races having more than four candidates… I find myself in over my head.~~

~~As such, I'll be updating this section of the guide significantly when the 2020 Injustice Watch voting guide goes out, because I simply cannot provide the level of information and analysis that they can, nor can I even come close. Once updated, this section of the Guide will highlight some of the judicial races that I think are most pressing, interesting, or have the highest stakes. The point of Girl, I Guess is to provide folks the best, and most accurate information possible, so y'all can make informed voting decisions, and for judges, Injustice Watch is that source.~~

~~Hopefully, this update will come sooner rather than later, as a very generous contact at Injustice Watch said they'd look into giving me a preview of a select number of elections that we collectively thought were worth a look. Stay tuned for more Girl, I Guess content in this section!!~~

My dear reader, the wonderful people, and total smartypants-es at Injustice Watch have graced us with their knowledge once more!! Yesterday, the Injustice Watch 2020 Judicial Voting Guide was released, and it's another great one. Injustice Watch sifts through history, bar association ratings, opinions and court cases, and basically everything else that you could want to know about a judge before voting for them. Also, there are 34 judicial elections on the ballot right now, and taking that on is a herculean task, so trust me when I say as a Writer of Voting Guides that Injustice Watch is doing Hashem's work.

I encourage you to check out their guide, and use the information there to make your choices about the judicial elections on your ballot!! For public interest, and because I love an opportunity

to be sassy about some judges, I'm covering a handful of races below that I think are particularly important, or struck my fancy.

Judge of the Supreme Court (Freeman Vacancy)

The Dish:

Yes, you read that right, we're voting for a judge on the Illinois Supreme Court! This is the highest legal body in the State of Illinois, and has the same powers over state law that the US Supreme Court has over federal (and state) laws, so this is incredibly important. It's also an election where voters will be asked to choose the replacement for the first person of color ever elected to the Supreme Court, Charles Freeman.

Incumbent P. Scott Neville comes recommended by all the bar associations that reviewed him, and has the Cook County Democratic Party endorsement, as well as endorsements from damn near every establishment Democrat in Cook County. He's a solid choice, and is working towards meaningful, if small, reforms on the Court. But he's not the candidate of choice for this Guide.

Daniel Epstein might look like a bad choice if you're only looking surface-level. He's got negative reviews from all the bar associations that looked at him, he's only been admitted to the Illinois State Bar for 5 years, and he has no judicial experience at all. But *wow* is this guy amazing. Not only is he endorsed by a slew of progressives and progressive organizations, but he embodies the concept of judicial activism in the best possible way. Epstein wants to focus less on the opinion-making duties of the Court (important, to be sure), and more on the ways that the Court can enact incredibly impactful reforms just by changing its own rules. His website has a full issues page, which highlights how he wants to use Court rules to end cash bail statewide, protect against judicial corruption (did you know judges get to decide their own conflicts of interest?? WILD!! HORRIBLE!!! ILLINOIS!!!!), expand discovery and the right to depositions, emphasize restorative justice courts, fight bias in sentencing, and force judges to explain every sentence they mete out. My friends at Injustice Watch even noted that all of the bar associations didn't recommend him, solely based on his amount of years practicing law, and two of those bar associations praised his intelligence, and his platform for reform. Based on his strong platform, and hefty progressive chops, **Daniel Epstein** is the Girl, I Guess pick for Judge of the Supreme Court for Illinois.

I do have a caveat about Epstein, though… despite his ideas and endorsements, he is still a White dude. Electing him over P. Scott Neville, Jr would make the Illinois Supreme Court an all-White bench, and that's… not great. Admittedly I did struggle over this choice for that reason, and I've made a bit of a co-endorsement here. While Epstein is my first choice, and is more proactive in his progressivism, Neville, Jr is Choice 1a, and I don't find his views or history offensive or conservative in any way.

Judge of the Appellate Court (Neville, Jr Vacancy)

The Dish:

Ahhhhhh, cascading appointments. Gotta love our state, and the judicial election system in general. This seat on the Appellate Court was vacated by current Illinois Supreme Court incumbent P. Scott Neville, Jr, in 2018, and is up for election. Thankfully, this is actually an easy race. There's only one candidate who's worth a damn, and that's incumbent **Michael B. Hyman**, who is getting my nod, and the Girl, I Guess endorsement for this seat. But because we all love a mess, I'm going to briefly cover the other candidates, as well. For what it's worth, Sandra Gisela Ramos doesn't seem all that terrible, but has a negative bar association rating from the Illinois State Bar Association, because they don't think she's handled enough complex legal matters, and she's a former State's Attorney. Carolyn Gallagher, who also has a negative bar association rating for lack of experience, circulated a letter threatening a popular and powerful party consultant, Mary Kay Dawson, with legal action. Gallagher claims that Dawson misrepresented herself as "'judicial consultant for the Democratic Party,' of spreading lies about her finances and divorce, and of offering to help Gallagher run against a slated candidate who was her client." Messy messy. Then comes Maureen Patricia O'Leary, a former state's attorney and near-unanimous "unqualified" candidate, who Injustice Watch has determined is likely a sham candidate. Unfortunately, the drama stops there, so vote Hyman, and call it a day.

Judge of the Appellate Court (Simon Vacancy)

The Dish:

The final Appellate Court race is a tight one, between incumbent and Cook County Party endorsee, John Griffin, and Person Who Seems Less Politically Connected, Sharon O. Johnson. Both received qualified marks from bar associations (although technically Griffin received the higher marks), but I don't like the fact that Griffin worked for a number of years at a law firm co-founded by his father, and I'm not a big fan of legacy law firms just as a rule. I'm giving my endorsement to **Sharon O. Johnson**, although both of the candidates seem fine and qualified.

Judge of the Circuit Court (K. Sheehan Vacancy)

The Dish:

I'm covering this race to give some props to a woman who's taking her second shot at being Illinois's first transgender judge, **Jill Rose Quinn**. She ran in 2018, but lost, and apparently she learned a lot from that experience, because she seems to be the frontrunner this time around, having snagged the Cook County Party endorsement, and solid ratings from all the bar associations. She also jokes on panels that she'd be the state's only truly objective divorce lawyer, having been on both sides of the issue, which, honestly, is just such a trans judge joke

that I have to automatically like her. Her opponents range from gross, in Fraternal Order of Police and Automatic Racist-By-Association James Samuel Worley, to messy, in Wendelin DeLoach, who was given a suspension in 1997 in Colorado for violating ethical standards for lawyers. This doesn't seem to be much of a contest. Vote for **Jill Rose Quinn**, and help Illinois get valuable trans representation on the bench.

Judge, 10th Subcircuit, McGing Vacancy

The Dish:

I was tipped off to this race by a couple of people who reached out to me, hoping to warn me about a candidate who is truly Bad News Bears. The McGing vacancy features Girl, I Guess endorsee **Jon Stromsta**, an actually qualified lawyer, former public defender, apparently Good Dude, and endorsee by several progressives including Girl, I Guess faves Matt Martin and Andre Vasquez. He's running against John Garrido, a CPD Lieutenant with 30 complaints against him, a literal Republican, and a part-time lawyer/full-time racist and hypocrite. Garrido is awful, and he wants to be a judge so that he can further his right-wing agenda, and help his cop buddies through the courts. Maire Aileen Dempsey is also running for this seat… she's rated qualified by bar associations, and Injustice Watch didn't find any major flags on her, and also she's a certified badass, but this one is just too important. **Jon Stromsta** has the experience and the ratings, and we can't let a cop be a judge.

Not This Again: Democratic Committeepeople for All 50 Wards

HA! I'm kidding!! There's no chance in hell I'm going to re-hash the mishegas that was the 2019 Chicago Municipal elections. Also, all but 14 of the races are uncontested anyway. The general rule that Girl, I Guess employs for these races is: If you like your Alderman/elected official that's running for the seat, then vote for them. If you don't like the Alderman/elected official that's running, vote against them if you've got the option. Otherwise, check who, if anyone, your Alderman is endorsing for the seat, and vote according to your preference.

A quick list of my picks in contested races of interest:

1st Ward: Daniel La Spata (he's running as a write-in candidate!)
10th Ward: Susan Sadlowski Garza
14th Ward: Aaron Ortiz
33rd Ward: Aaron Goldstein
40th Ward: Andre Vasquez
45th Ward: Ellen Hill

49th Ward: Kelly Cassidy
50th Ward: Halle Rasmussen Quezada Olmos