



**Candidate Name:** Ruth Cruz

**Office Sought:** Alderperson

**Ward:** 30

**Campaign Committee Name:** Friends of Ruth Cruz

**Campaign Website:** [www.RuthCruzfor30.com](http://www.RuthCruzfor30.com)

### **Campaign Finance**

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

I am certainly open to it, but have questions about the funding mechanisms. Chicago's municipal fiscal position is improving, but we have a long way to go to shore up the cities' finances. Instead, I think we should consider further limitations to campaign contributions for any election occurring in Chicago through expanded campaign contribution restrictions to any person who may run for municipal office.

The Chicago Board of Ethics does have some contribution limits in place for those who are doing business with, a contracted entity for, or a registered lobbyist. Those limits do not fall in line with campaign limits imposed by the Illinois State Board of Elections either. In recent years, the Board of Ethics began looking at campaign finance reports by sitting electeds in Chicago, forcing many Alderpersons to return money to donors.

- 2. Currently, entities doing (or seeking to do) business with the City are limited to contributing \$1,500 to City officials' campaigns. But the limitation does not extend to officers or other high-level employees of those entities,**



**who can still contribute thousands to officials making decisions about contracts with their companies. Would you support eliminating this loophole, as [cities like New York](#) have?**

Yes. In addition to helping level the playing field for candidates with less access to traditional campaign contributions or contributors, this will go a long way towards helping root out corruption and soft influence through donations in Chicago. Anything we can do to help rebuild trust between Chicagoans and their elected officials.

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

I think \$750 is a reasonable limit for lobbyists and vendors – as long as the Board of Ethics developed a campaign finance reporting tool to track dollars received by candidates. Without a reporting system in place in Chicago, the Board would be forced to play catch up by reviewing campaign finance quarterly reports after contributions have been made, reported, and most likely spent. Without a reporting mechanism tracked and monitored by the City, I would support \$1,000 limits so that one-time maximum contributions trigger 5-day reporting requirements as required by IL Election Law.

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

I would be open to some sort of “relative” max amounts perhaps. Like that one campaign can’t raise a certain percentage over another campaign, so one campaign that has all the structural advantages can’t drown out a grassroots campaign 8 to 1. Some way to ensure there is an ability to compete for folks of diverse backgrounds who are not “connected” to campaign and get their message out.



## Elections

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

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

Absolutely yes! Not only will RCV help elevate candidates that may not have the financial resources to build out the necessary campaign infrastructure, it also inherently leads a campaign into a positive direction. It encourages candidates to talk about THEIR ideas and THEIR values – not about what polls tell them to talk about.

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

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

Yes - absolutely. For the same reasons I support RCV for the mayoral race, I think this is much more important and beneficial for residents who have probably talked to every candidate a dozen times on their front door, and at as many community forums or events. In my race, we hear from residents that they are having a hard time deciding who they will vote for because they have had such strong, positive interactions with everyone running in the 30th Ward.

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

I don't think there should be any changes to the petition process for municipal candidates. As it is the most publicly-accessible position, collecting petitions from those you need to earn votes from is a candidates' first chance to make their case to the voters they need to convince to vote for them on Election Day.

To me, it is a good first test to see if a candidate has the mind to serve their constituents. Collecting petition signatures for office of Alderman is such a small



number that even candidates with limited resources should be able to achieve their signature goals in the 90 day filing period. It is a good indicator of the ability of a candidate to do more with less as well, as many electeds are challenged to do exactly this every day in their jobs.

I do, however, support reforming the requirements for our Statewide and Federal candidates – so long as we enact Ranked Choice Voting to give candidates a more equitable shake on Election Day. I would support allowing candidates to pay a substantial fee or submit petition signatures, and use a filing fee to help support campaign finance reform measures.

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

Digital on-site signatures can be highly convenient, eliminate the paper trail, and make it more organized and easier to use the information during the petition challenge. However, it may create hesitation or mistrust from the voters to sign an on-site digital signature, perhaps a pilot program could help.

## **General**

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

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

The reason I am running is to bring new ideas and new approaches to government, so I would list my campaign as an example. I am running because we all want to see government work better and more transparently for the people. I will be bringing in participatory budgeting, a Community Zoning Committee, and other programs and policies to increase ethics, accessibility and transparency.

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



I think the size of City Council is too large, and I think cutting the size down to maybe 35 or so would be fine – as long as the size of the staffing budget is substantially increased. Constituent services is number one service that Alderpersons provide residents, and there is still a taxpayer and community benefit to some sort of hyper-local representation.

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

I commend Alderman Vasquez and his efforts to have City Council and Committee meetings held more frequently. The perception is that Alderpersons spend little time legislating, and most of their time trading service-based favors to their residents in exchange for their support.

Given how little business is conducted by City Council Committees – especially with how much of it is considered to be “routine” – I support reducing the number of committees substantially. Understanding that all committees are created under the Rules of Order adopted at the start of the next session of Council, I would also like to see a much more public discussion surrounding the development of these rules themselves.

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

Yes and no. I do think that there are some things that the Alderperson does not need to be involved with – like loading/standing zones, handicap parking signs, or public way use permits – the Alderperson should still retain some involvement in matters governing zoning or residential permit parking, or other matters that involve or impact residents in a hyper-local way.



## Ethics

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

While I have accepted campaign contributions from lobbyists, their generosity does not buy my support. I will make my votes on legislation based on whether or not it is good for the residents of the 30th Ward. Having been raised in the community I still call home now, I have a pretty good sense of what the neighborhood expects and needs. I will vote based on what is good for the neighborhood, not what is only good for those have given to my campaign.

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

Yes

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

Yes. However, so much power is, by the Municipal Code, placed at the feet of the Mayor, it makes matters difficult. While the Mayor needs formal support from the Alders for approval of their legislative agenda, I do support Alderpersons challenging legislation as a way to leverage better council involvement in developing legislation for the good of Chicago.

It is hard when departments are run by Mayoral appointees for good legislation to gain traction or recognition. I would love to see City Council and committee chairs put forth more legislation on committee agendas without prior approval from the 5th floor, and make the Mayor become more involved in a much more public facing position – fighting down legislation they disagree with at meetings instead of not allowing it to make an agenda.