

Gubernatorial Candidate Questions

- **According to Housing Action Illinois, there is no county in Illinois where full-time minimum wage employees can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. What is your plan for ensuring IL residents make a livable wage?**

One of my most important goals as the next governor of Illinois will be to create jobs and restore economic stability and vibrancy to the hardest hit communities in our state. If we improve the prospects for economic prosperity of a community, we can create greater stability for our children and families and reduce the potential for violence. By increasing access to capital, training, and mentorship for small business owners and entrepreneurs, we can create jobs in communities that need it the most. I believe we can and must accomplish this goal, especially for Illinois' black and brown communities.

Unfortunately, Bruce Rauner vetoed the bill that raised the Illinois state minimum wage to \$15 an hour. As governor, I will introduce an increase in the minimum wage to \$15. And I'm not just going to file the bill —that's not enough. I'm also going to work the roll call under the dome, and work to get public opinion on our side across the state. I'll work with employers to phase that increase in over a number of years. Beyond a minimum wage, we need to create jobs and improve skills training to ensure working families earn a good living.

I also support barring employers from requesting wage history during the hiring process. Overall, we need to make every effort to bring wage equity for women. Women should earn equal pay for equal work. Period.

As governor, I will also support the right of workers to bargain collectively for wages, benefits, and working conditions. In Illinois, our labor movement is under attack, and as governor, I will protect the rights of workers in the public and private sectors. The state must recognize the value of partnering with organized labor to ensure economic justice and fairness. As governor, after the Supreme Court's ruling on Janus v. AFSCME, I will work with the labor movement to protect the rights of public sector workers to collective bargaining. I am proud to be the candidate of labor and to have received the endorsements of over 30 individual unions, including the Illinois AFL-CIO, the Illinois Education Association, and the Illinois Federation of Teachers. I will always stand up for working families and support our labor movement.

- **What is your plan to revitalize our state economy?**

As governor, I will prioritize job creation throughout Illinois. It is critical that we build up our state and provide people with job opportunities after Bruce Rauner's budget impasse and record of instability and uncertainty. I have a five-point job creation plan that focuses on attracting and building up small businesses, building infrastructure, including statewide high-

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speed broadband internet connectivity, investing in higher education, nurturing our agricultural economy, and jumpstarting manufacturing.

In addition to attracting larger companies, Illinois must invest in the ecosystem for small businesses and start-ups that are the backbone of our economy and employ millions of people. Bruce Rauner decimated the network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) across the state. I will prioritize revitalization of small businesses throughout the state by expanding access to capital, rebuilding SBDCs, and creating and enhancing new business incubators and accelerators.

- **Is there any truth to the often-made claim that Cook County is ‘bleeding the state’? If so, can you point to these specifics?**

I will be a governor for the entire state of Illinois.

- **What is your plan for resolving the pension crisis while upholding the promises made to Illinois workers who put their own money into their pensions year after year and don’t have Social Security to fall back on?**

Pensions are a promise to teachers, firefighters, nurses and other hard-working men and women, and the Illinois Supreme Court has ruled that the state must fund these pensions. Bruce Rauner has spent the last four years trying to break that promise. He has sought to cut pensions and destroy unions instead of bringing people together to grow our economy, pass a balanced budget, and work to solve this problem. Bruce Rauner has also proposed letting Illinois declare bankruptcy, which would destroy the state’s credit rating, cost taxpayers billions in higher interest payments, and undermine the very foundation of our economy. Throughout his term in office, he has been fighting against working families. He vetoed a minimum wage increase, closed small business development centers, and halted infrastructure projects, putting thousands of people out of work.

There are a number of plans that have been discussed and debated about the future of our pension system. One proposed plan would step up our pension payments now, allowing the state to level out its future obligations so that we can more easily manage our future budgets. We also must never again skip pension payments. Unlike Bruce Rauner, I will honor the promises that have been made to the working men and women in Illinois and work with the legislature to address the pension issue, neither of which the current governor has done.

- **How do you define “Sanctuary State?” And how will you make sure that our state is not invested and does not invest in any funds connected to ICE Detention Centers? For that matter, do you have any financial connections to ICE Detention Centers or private prisons?**

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I am not invested in ICE Detention Centers or private prisons. Trump's use of ICE to instill fear and separate immigrant families is cruel and betrays our nation's values. That's why we need to take back Congress and elect Democrats who will pass comprehensive immigration reform.

As governor, I will work to make Illinois a welcoming state where everyone is treated with dignity and has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. That means standing up to Donald Trump's bigoted policies, enhancing funding for immigrant and refugee services, expanding healthcare options for undocumented immigrants, providing access to financial aid for undocumented students, and improving the U-Visa certification process for victims of violent crime.

- **The current citizen-supported Consent Decree is historic in terms of citizen activity. How can you support this citizen-based Consent Decree process to encourage police accountability and put an end to police brutality in the City of Chicago and Illinois overall?**

As President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing notes, "...trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they protect and serve is essential in a democracy." That's why we need to work to increase accountability and cultural competency in our police force through rigorous training and a renewed emphasis on community policing.

First, we need to develop bright-line policies for when and how use of force is acceptable and ensure officers are trained and held accountable for obeying the practices they've been taught. One way to do that is by making these policies public. Second, we must restore our focus on community policing through strategies and policies that underscore the value of community engagement. Finally, we need to increase officer training on how to better identify and manage individuals with mental health challenges. We should make cultural competency training mandatory both at the cadet level and throughout the various stages of professional development.

- **Do you support the efforts of Rep. Cassidy & Sen. Steans via Senate Bill 316 and House Bill 2353 to legalize the sale of adult use cannabis in Illinois and create the necessary regulatory and taxation framework to do so? And what ideas do you have for implementing legalization in a way that supports all Illinois residents? For example, when Californians voted to legalize marijuana last year, they also voted to let people petition courts to reduce or hide convictions for past marijuana crimes – they can now petition to change some felonies to misdemeanors, change some misdemeanors to infractions, and wipe away convictions for possessing or growing small amounts of the drug. Do you support such measures in Illinois?**

I support legalizing and taxing the recreational use of marijuana, which is estimated to generate as much as \$700 million a year for the state. I will work with community stakeholders and policy

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makers to legalize and decriminalize marijuana, reduce mass incarceration, and reinvest in Illinois communities. I will put in place a strong regulatory system and a framework to license businesses to sell marijuana to consumers for recreational use, placing an emphasis on intentionally including black and brown entrepreneurs in the planning and licensing of new marijuana businesses. New jobs and businesses must be created in the communities that have experienced the most disinvestment under Bruce Rauner. It is also important to learn lessons from other states that have already legalized marijuana.

But more than just legalizing, we must decriminalize marijuana as we move forward in reforming our broken criminal justice system. Criminalizing marijuana hasn't made our communities safer, but has disproportionately impacted black and brown communities. The criminalization of cannabis never has been and never will be enforced fairly, and it's time to bring that to an end. To right past wrongs, we also have to commute sentences of people in prison who are there for marijuana offenses.

- **What will you do to ensure that Illinois residents receive the mental health services they need, even when local authorities, like Chicago's Mayor, underfund these services?**

Illinois' biggest challenge is the failure to address the state's poor fiscal condition, which has been exacerbated under Bruce Rauner's manufactured two-year budget crisis. It's the constitutional obligation of the governor to propose a balanced budget to the legislature, but in three years, Bruce Rauner hasn't met that obligation even once. Bruce Rauner's crisis blocked critical investments in education, human services, and economic development, especially in our most economically challenged communities. In the area of mental health, Bruce Rauner's manufactured budget crisis reduced access to adult psychiatric services, mental health counseling, and support services for mentally ill children. For Chicagoans, Bruce Rauner's budget crisis compounded years of fluctuation in the availability of mental health services. Even intermittent access to these services can be devastating for individuals and families.

I'm committed to ensuring that Illinois residents have access to mental health services in every part of the state. As governor, I'll work with the legislature and stakeholders to pass a balanced, forward thinking budget that prioritizes job creation, expands healthcare coverage, restores the state's social safety net, and fosters a quality, equitable public education so that every Illinois family has the tools they need to build better lives.

- **How will you as Governor protect our states' most vulnerable if national protections are stripped away? i.e. – environmental regulations, affordable health care, a woman's right to choose, voter access, LGBTQIA rights, protections for undocumented residents, etc...**

Donald Trump's rhetoric has curated a culture of bigotry and fear in this country and he is now implementing policies to back that up. Trump rescinded critical Obama era criminal justice

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reform policies that led to fewer prosecutions of nonviolent, low-level drug offenders and fewer mandatory-minimum sentences. Trump also rolled back essential protections for transgender students and recently attempted to ban transgender people from serving in the military. Trump even defended some neo-Nazis and white supremacists at a confederate rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

As governor, I will bring people together to create opportunity and stand firm against hate. I will fiercely defend women's healthcare, fight for policies that improve women's economic well-being, and foster a culture in which sexual harassment is not tolerated. I will also stand up to Donald Trump when he proposes policies that hurt Illinois women, and I will stand with women as we work to root out sexual harassment and discrimination from our society. Finally, I will stand up to Donald Trump's attacks on our environment and join the U.S. Climate Alliance to uphold the provisions of the Paris Agreement.

- Hydraulic fracking is currently going on in the southern part of our state. Will you put a stop to this?**

I oppose fracking.

- The State of Illinois is a Great Lakes state. How will you support the Great Lakes Compact?**

I will fight to maintain full funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Illinois also does not have a comprehensive water use plan. I want to be the first governor to put a plan in place to make sure we are making the best use of our most critical resource in the future.

- What are some ideas you have for making IL a model green energy state? How can we move away as a state from fossil fuel consumption, production, and sale?**

First, I will stand up to Donald Trump's attacks on our environment and join the U.S. Climate Alliance to uphold the provisions of the Paris Agreement. I am also a strong believer in clean energy as a job creator. I was one of the earliest supporters of the Clean Energy Trust, which promotes job creation and entrepreneurship in the clean energy industry. I am committed to moving Illinois toward 100% clean, renewable energy and expanding energy efficiency jobs across the state through full implementation of the Future Energy Jobs Act. I have a plan for Illinois jobs that includes investing in next-gen infrastructure for our future. I plan to work with environmental policy experts, community and labor stakeholders, industry leaders, and committed policymakers to achieve these goals so that all can share in the benefits of a clean energy economy. Throughout the move to clean, renewable energy, it is critical that we provide transitioning communities the workforce development training, infrastructure upgrades, and transition assistance they need to adopt new and alternative industries.

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- **How will you ensure that a college education is affordable & accessible, especially for students whose families make \$125,000 or less? How could we make college free for everyone?**

Higher education has become unaffordable for too many Illinois students and families. During Rauner's term in office, tuition increased by more than 20 percent at three public universities and at seven campuses overall. Today, the average cost of in-state tuition and fees at a four-year public university in Illinois is 5th highest in the nation. As a result, Illinois college students graduate with an average of around \$29,000 in student loans. This debt affects their ability to purchase a home, start a family, and save for retirement, compromising their future and hurting the economy of our state.

By derailing financial aid and destabilizing support for colleges and universities, Bruce Rauner has failed every Illinois family struggling to pay for college. Colleges and universities have reverted to a historically defensive posture rather than focusing on modernizing higher education. This is inefficient, costly, and a detriment to our students as we fail to maximize our investments and improve student outcomes. By holding state funding for higher education hostage during his multi-year budget crisis, Rauner caused an interruption in financial aid, cutting off aid to more than 100,000 MAP recipients. As a result, enrollment at Illinois community colleges and public universities declined by more than 72,000 students, and a tidal wave of doubt surrounding the future of higher education in Illinois swept over the state.

As governor, I'll lead the effort to make college more affordable for every student. Working hand-in-hand with the higher education community, elected officials, and other stakeholders, we will address the rising costs of college, increase financial aid opportunities for students and their families across the state, and provide relief to those already saddled with debt. Together, we'll increase college affordability, attract more qualified students, and reduce costs for Illinois families. Here's my plan to increase college affordability:

- Increase funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) by 50 percent and raise the maximum MAP award each student can receive.
 - Join a dozen other states in establishing a new state-administered student loan refinancing program to help students and families reduce their student loan payments by hundreds or thousands of dollars per year.
 - Restore funding for community colleges and public universities to pre-Rauner levels so schools can rebuild their high-quality programs and faculty.
 - Create a task force to examine how Illinois can set a course toward providing free college education.
- **Will you support legislation to end the tax-credit scholarship program? (*Investing In Kids* is a backhanded voucher program that was included last minute in the school funding bill passed as a concession to privatization supporters.)**

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With public schools inadequately funded, I oppose taking state money away from public schools for private school tax credits. As governor, I will eliminate this scholarship program and focus on strengthening public schools.

- Will you support legislation that will end the Springfield Charter Commission's ability to override local school board decisions? (Legislation to end the Charter Commission was passed by both houses last year and then vetoed by Gov. Rauner. The Commission takes away local power to open and close charters.)**

I support the elimination of the Illinois Charter School Commission.

- Will you support legislation to create an elected school board for Chicago?**

I support an elected school board that is inclusive and representative of stakeholders.

- Considering that more money has been spent on this Gubernatorial campaign than any other in our nation's history, mostly funded through the candidates themselves, do you support a small donor-matching campaign finance system to empower working-class residents without the resources you have to run for office?**

We need comprehensive campaign finance reform in Illinois, and as governor, I will work with stakeholders to change the system and put limits in place. Public matching funds for judicial races is one important potential component of any comprehensive reform package. The judicial branch must maintain independence from political and special interests.

- Do you think you pay enough in taxes?**

Illinois needs to replace its regressive flat income tax with a fair tax, the same type of fair tax that the vast majority of states and the U.S. government have. It will help us balance the budget and improve funding for our education system. People like me and Bruce Rauner should pay a higher rate than teachers, firefighters, nurses and childcare workers. I will negotiate rates in a bipartisan fashion with the legislature, where we prioritize that those with higher incomes pay a higher rate than those in the middle class. We will also work to lower income taxes on the middle class and those striving to get there, and raise the state's share of education funding and alleviate the dependency on regressive local property taxes as the predominant source of school funding.

- How will you strengthen & support civic education and engagement in Illinois?**

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I've spent my life building and strengthening civic institutions in Illinois. I spearheaded the effort to build 1871, a non-profit small business incubator. 1871 brought together the educational and civic resources to support startup businesses and has already created more than 7,000 good paying jobs in our state. Illinois was named one of the top ten technology startup hubs in the world, and 1871 was named the best business incubator in North America.

I also led the creation of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, a nationally recognized institution where more than 50,000 students learn to fight bigotry and hatred each year. The museum also trains thousands of teachers to take these universal lessons back to their classrooms.

As governor, I look forward to building on the work I've done to create a robust civic life in our state that promotes civic education and engagement.

- **How will you address voter intimidation and suppression in Illinois; furthermore, how seriously will you address election hacking?**

I will be a steadfast advocate in protecting the integrity of Illinois' elections, both by defending election security and fighting to expand voting rights. While our current governor refuses to stand up to Donald Trump and end Crosscheck in Illinois, I will. And while our current governor vetoes bills critical to expanding voting rights, my running mate Juliana Stratton has been a leader in expanding the right to vote in our state, and we will continue that fight as governor and lieutenant governor.