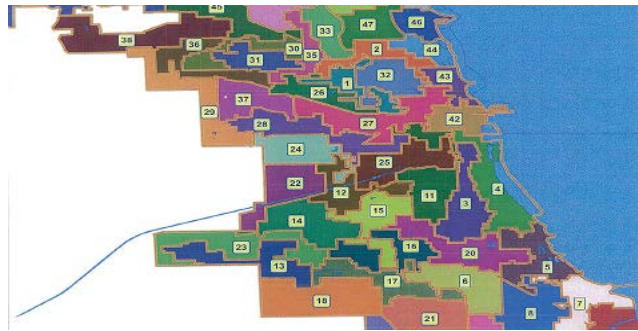


BOARD OF ETHICS ADVISORY REGARDING 2016 ELECTIONS, INCLUDING WARD COMMITTEEMAN

In March and November 2016, voters in the City of Chicago will elect nominees and candidates for federal office (including President and U.S. Senate), as well as for various statewide offices, such as Comptroller, and Cook County offices, such as State's Attorney. They will also elect ward committeemen in each of the City's 50 wards. Some Chicago City Council members and some City of Chicago employees will stand for election or re-election for the position of ward committeeman in March 2016.

The City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance restricts the political activity of all City employees and officials, including those who are candidates themselves, or those who wish to work in connection with *any* of these upcoming elections. Moreover, the Ordinance's limitations on campaign contributions also apply to contributions made to incumbent City elected officials who are running for ward committeemen, or any City employees who are running for that office as well.



RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND WORKING ON ANY POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS.

For a summary of the restrictions imposed by City law on City personnel who wish to work in connection with these upcoming elections, see the Board's Plain English Guide to Political Activity and Election Work, here:

<http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/Publications/Pol-ACT-2015.pdf>

RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANDIDATES FOR WARD COMMITTEEMAN.

The office of ward committeeman is not a City elected office. It is, rather, a party office, established under the Illinois Election Code. Nonetheless, the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance applies to campaign contributions made to City elected officials or employees who are *also* candidates for ward committeeman. The Ordinance subject certain persons or entities to a \$1,500 annual cap on political contributions made to "any official or employee of the city who is seeking election to any other [that is, non-City] office." See §2-156-445(a).

In Case No. 09058.Q, the Board addressed these issues. The gist of that decision is that if, for example, Alderman John Doe of the 51st Ward is also a candidate for Democratic ward committeeman of his ward, then, under state law, he must establish two separate committees—one for each elected office, that is, one for his aldermanic office, and a second for his ward committeeman candidacy. Thus, persons who are subject to the annual \$1,500 cap on political contributions* may contribute up to the \$1,500 limit to *each* of his official committees in a single calendar year—that is, \$1,500 to “Doe for 51st Ward Alderman,” and another \$1,500 to “Doe for Ward Committeeman,” for a total of \$3,000 in a single calendar year.

Please do note, though: in Case No. 09058.Q, the non-City office in question involved both a primary and a general election. Each candidacy, the primary and the general election, are considered separate, distinct candidacies, subject to a separate \$1,500 contribution limit from persons subject to that limit [in addition to being subject to a separate \$1,500 per calendar year limit in contributions to the candidate’s committee for elected *City* office]. This would have enabled a contributor subject to the limits to contribute, in a single calendar year, \$3,000 to the non-City candidacy, and another \$1,500 to the recipient’s aldermanic election committee.

However, the office of ward committeeman is decided in a single election, called the General Primary. See

<https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2016Canguide.pdf>

Therefore, in a single calendar year, persons subject to the Ordinance’s contribution limits* may contribute up to \$1,500 to a sitting City elected official’s authorized political committee for his or her City office, and up to an additional

\$1,500 to his or her political committee for ward committeeman. If the candidate for ward committeeman is a City employee, they may contribute up to \$1,500 to his or her ward committeeman committee in a single calendar year.



To read this Board of Ethics opinion, see:

http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/AO_CampFinanacing/09058Q.pdf

*Persons subject to this limit are: (1) persons who have done business with the City, or with the Chicago Transit Authority, the Board of Education, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago City Colleges, or the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority within the preceding four calendar years; (2) person who are seeking to do business [as defined in §§2-156-445(a) and 2-156-010(x)]; and (3) lobbyists registered with the Board of Ethics.

QUESTIONS? If you are a candidate for ward committeeman, or represent or work for one, and have questions about these provisions, we strongly recommend that you consult with the Board of Ethics for a confidential advisory opinion.

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