

Politics from a New Perspective

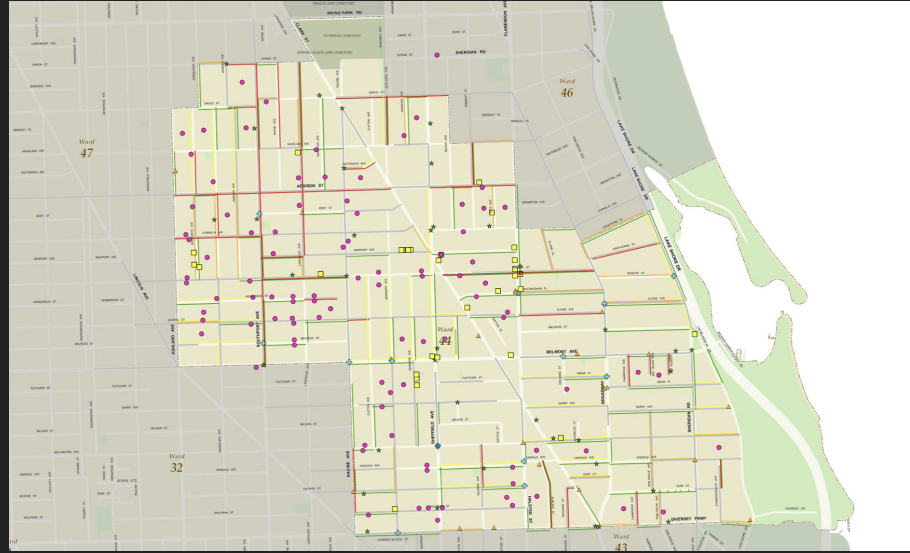
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About Me

- In my Sophomore year here at Loyola
- Political Science major and Marketing minor
- I have always had a passion for making politics better and promoting social justice
- I received the Mellon Foundation scholarship for my internship work which led me to present here today



Paging at the Texas Senate at 10



The 44th ward service office - 10 hours a week
January - May

History of Political system

- Chicago has a very unique Political aldermanic system with around 50 alder people each taking roughly 30,000 residents under their wing
- Tom Tunney was Chicago's 1st Alderman to identify as a LGBTQ+ and was appointed in June 2003
- Since then he was reelected and served as Alderman for the next 20 years, retiring just this year
 - Tom has left a legacy of service and as a revolutionary politician who is notable for his connections with others

Opinions on politics from voters

- Too overly partisan
- Government programs not well run or temporary
- Not enough initiatives taken to strengthen the economy
- Inefficient and unempathetic workers

People with low government confidence are less likely to pay taxes, vote, and participate in their communities less all which decrease efficiency further.

The data

- Illinois has the lowest rate of confidence in their state government
- Nationally Pew reports that Americans Trust the government to do the right thing just 29% of the time
- Covid, raising taxes, and cuts to public services all have contributed
- Tunney reelected after appointment 5 times with average of 80% of the vote over those 20 years

So what is he doing right?

States With Least and Most Confidence in Their State Government

In [state name], do you have confidence in each of the following or not? How about the [state name] government in general?

	% Confident	% Not confident
LEAST CONFIDENCE		
Illinois	25	74
Rhode Island	33	66
Connecticut	39	60
New Jersey	41	59
Louisiana	44	55
Kansas	45	53
Pennsylvania	46	53
New York	46	53
MOST CONFIDENCE		
North Dakota	81	18
Wyoming	76	23
Nebraska	74	25
Montana	72	27
South Dakota	71	28
Utah	70	29
Minnesota	69	31

2015 Gallup 50-State Poll

Community

Alderman Tunney at polls assisting constituents.



There are several ways that Tunney establishes and creates a sense of community with his residents. This buys him loyalty and trust, which most other Aldermanic offices struggle with.



Alderman Tunney and Alderman Elect Bennett Lawson helping clean up streets in lakeview.

The issues

Crime

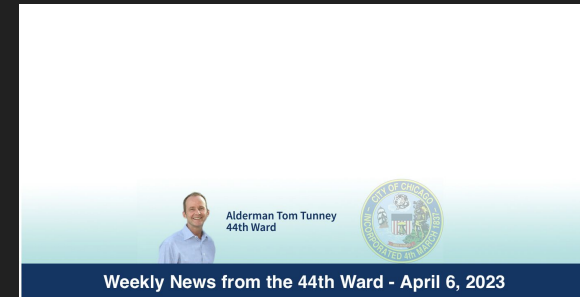
- Meets with the police in the area- weekly beat meetings where police can address concerns and inform the public
- Gives out free harm prevention drugs- NARCAN to stop opioid overdose
- Has a public safety director who acts a liaison between constituents and the police
- Uses menu funds from city funding to upgrade lighting infrastructure

Business

- Owns Ann Sathers
- Meets with every business entering the ward to discuss their plan and conveys that plan to the community who gets to vote on allowing the business to join the neighborhood
- Chairs the zoning committee

LGBTQ+ issues

- Helped establish the AIDS garden
- Works on establishing helpful language
- Supports and facilitates Chicago's annual pride parade



Investments into art and culture

- Tom used menu funds from the city budget to invest in murals, parks, and other public goods.
- Art and culture support the economy, improve well being of citizens and unify communities
- Only 1.3 % of Chicago's construction budget is spent on art and beautification



PEW - Trust and Distrust in America

86% believe it is possible to improve interpersonal confidence across the nation, and a number of their answers focus on how local communities can be laboratories for trust-building to confront partisan tensions and overcome tribal divisions.

There has been a Cultural shift away from close-knit communities. Viewing everything through hyper partisan political lenses. Empathy as well as generally attempting to understand and to help each other are all at disturbingly low levels. People are quick to attack and to vilify others, solely on the basis of accusations or along partisan lines.

“Get to know your local community. Take small steps towards improving daily life, even if it’s just a trash pick-up. If people feel engaged with their environment and with each other, and they can work together even in a small way, I think that builds a foundation for working together on more weighty issues.”

Teachings I've gained from Alderman Tunney

- There are still politicians out there fighting for their people
- Career politicians can be positive forces in their community when they stay true to their values and the community they serve
- Not everyone will be satisfied with government but having confidence in government leaders and the actions they take is necessary to functionality.



Takeaways

- Connection at a local level is key to building and maintaining trust from citizens
- Integrity and following through on promises, even if not all, builds confidence in the character of a politician and thus confidence in the institutions they work for
- Strong stances will be better accepted by citizens when they aren't contaminated with partisan language, arguments, and division.
- Confidence in government increases efficiency and therefore must start on a local level.

Sources

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