

Legislative Director Report – Kevin Palmer September - 2019

Fundraisers -

Illinois State Representative Theresa Mah 2nd, held her re-election kick-off on Monday September 9 in Chicago. I spoke to Representative Mah and thanked her for her support this past Spring on a variety of issues that were important to the IFT and education in general. Representative Mah is certainly a friend of labor and of education. Also in attendance, and I spoke to, were Representative Aaron Ortiz 1st as well as Representative Delia Ramirez 4th.

Illinois State Representative Luis Arroyo 3rd, held his fundraiser and re-election kickoff on Thursday September 11 in Chicago. Rep. Arroyo did a mock signing ceremony highlighting the Capital Bill that he was instrumental in passing. I thanked Rep. Arroyo for his strong support of Unions and for helping pass legislation geared towards education issues. Also present was Illinois State Senator Iris Martinez 20th, who is my state senator. I spoke to her and thanked her for her eventual support for education legislation. I say eventual because in 2018 IFT chose not to endorse her since her education rating fell to below 70%. She has since advocated for issues that are vital to education and has begun to redeem herself.

On Monday September 16, I attended the Fall Progressive Fundraiser held by former Cook County Clerk David Orr who has since formed a PAC – Good Government Illinois - to support Progressive candidates. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot was the keynote speaker. Also in attendance was Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi, who we endorsed, and 32nd Ward Alderman Scott Waguespack who is my alderman. Scott was recently elected chairman of the Finance Committee and I was able to speak to Scott and thank him for continual support of education in the city. I think that Local 1211 at these city/county wide events highlights our presence in Progressive politics. Additionally, I reconnected with Professor Bill Ayers and his wife, both professors of education at UIC and was an early education advisor to then Illinois State Senator Barack Obama.

On Tuesday September 17, I attended a fundraiser for Illinois State Representative Celine Villanueva 21st District. Celine is part of a new freshmen class of representatives in the General Assembly that are former local/community grassroots activists that are reshaping Illinois politics for the better. Along with Representative Villanueva, Representative Aaron Ortiz 1st District was present and is a part of the same new faces in the General Assembly. I was able to speak to both Celine and Aaron and thanked them for their support of education issues. In her welcoming remarks, Representative Villanueva addressed the help of CTU/IFT in supporting her reelection efforts and the need for stronger education funding in Illinois. Additionally, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi attended as did the newly elected Alderman of the 22nd Ward, Michael Rodriguez.

On Wednesday September 25 I attended a fundraiser for the Chicago Progressive Reform Caucus of the Chicago City Council. Present were 17 of the 18 Aldermen who are a part of the caucus, representing 2/5 of the city council. Attending were - Ald. Daniel LaSpata (1); Ald. Sophia King (4); Ald. Leslie Hairston (5); Ald. Roderick Sawyer (6); Ald. Susan Sadlowski-Garza (10); Ald. Stephanie Coleman (16); Ald. David Moore (17); Ald. Jeanette Taylor (20); Ald. Michael Rodriguez (22); Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez (25); Ald. Rosanna Rodriguez (33); Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35); Ald. Felix Cardona, Jr. (31); Ald. Scott Waugespack (32); Ald. Andre Vasquez (40); Ald. Matt Martin (47); and Ald. Maria Hadden (49).

I was able to speak to Aldermen Sawyer, Sadlowski-Garza (Chair of the caucus), Ramirez-Rosa, Waugespack (my alderman), and Vasquez (Secretary of the Caucus). Also in attendance were State Representative Villanueva (whose fundraiser I attended last week and we were able to speak again), Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi, State Senator Robert Peters (13th District) who is finishing out former State Senator, now Attorney General Kwame Raoul's seat, as well as several candidates for judicial positions throughout Cook County. To assess how effective the Progressive Reform Caucus is with education issues and how they are seen as instrumental in making education a city priority, the fundraiser was held just outside where the vote tallying was occurring regarding whether CTU membership would authorize a strike.