

Rev. Clay Evans, Founder
Concerned Clergy for a Better Chicago
4543 S. Princeton Ave.
Chicago, IL 60609

October 7, 2009

Dear Rev. Evans:

We write to you in the spirit of respect for your organization and love of God. A few of our members attended the September 29th and 30th meetings. At the conclusion of the latter meeting, we understand a vote was taken that resulted in Todd Stroger receiving the endorsement of the Concerned Clergy for a Better Chicago for Cook County Board President. We have no problem with the group's endorsement of Stroger, however, we do have serious concerns of the process that led to it.

With a stated purpose of being "a call for unification," lead by ministers in Cook County, the actions of the group have created a misperception among some that it represents a majority view of the African-American community. First, there's no evidence to uphold that view. Secondly, the groups' members—whether it's 200 or 300 strong—represent only a small segment of the thousands of faith leaders in Cook County.

Perception aside, as leaders of faith, we serve the better interests of our members when we are honest and forthright about the viability of respective candidacies. Let's turn away from the politics of narrow interests and partisanship, and join in a process that examines core attributes of each of the five Democratic candidates for Cook County Board President. The lack of a reasonable, quantifiable candidates' evaluation discredits the entire process. Was the purpose to orchestrate an endorsement for Stroger or was it to initiate an objective evaluation of each candidate's core strengths and weaknesses to determine the viability of their respective candidacies?

Unfortunately, we have not heard nor seen in writing a description of the fundamental areas upon which each candidate was to be evaluated. To that end, would you please share with us in writing what criterion was used to determine the group's endorsement selection? We submit to you, respectfully, an objective assessment of each candidate's campaign should have included these basic core areas:

- Name recognition
- Favorability and non-favorability rating
- Public and professional accomplishments
- Knowledge of public health, the criminal justice system and County government
- Campaign finances; fundraising capability
- Petition drive performance

The absence of an evaluative, quantifiable process that does not incorporate these categories is unfair to all candidates and clearly compromises and demeans the endorsement by the group. As a consequence, we reject the endorsement by the Concerned Clergy. In the spirit of unity, we look forward to working together in the future to support candidates who best represent the interests of our beloved community.

May God Bless You Always,



Rev. Paul Jakes, Jr., President

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