

More on my Agenda

1. Who is Zerlina running against?

In May 2023, Brandon Johnson vacated his seat as Cook County Commissioner in 1st District to become mayor of Chicago. Tara Stamps, who is employed by the Chicago Teachers Union, was appointed to fill Johnson's remaining few months in office. That interim role expires on March 19, 2024, when voters will determine their next commissioner. Ms. Smith-Members is running against Ms. Tara Stamps for that seat.

2. Why is Zerlina running for office?

Zerlina is a noted community activist and organizer. Zerlina is seeking office to serve constituents who are disgruntled by the current state of politics in the county government, especially those who believe the Cook County Board is being influenced by power-hungry Chicago entities, such as the Chicago Teachers Union and believe taxes can be reduced if the some of the counties 600 plus operating units are consolidated.

Zerlina's top 5 platform issues are:

I Public Safety for Everyone.

YOUR SAFETY is Zerlina's highest priority. She will WORK tirelessly with families, community leaders, the Cook County Sheriff's office, the Chicago Police Department, police departments for the villages, social services, and government officials to prevent crimes. She will HELP residents in need get essential services and avoid criminal activity. She will DEMAND law enforcement by the Cook County State's Attorney to keep you safe from violent offenders.

II Zerlina will help People in Need to Gain Services and Avoid Crime.

Zerlina will SOLVE causes of crime. Today's politicians have failed to do this. Crime has gotten worse! Zerlina WANTS \$100 million in government funds to STOP Cook County's opioid overdose deaths, which broke a new record in 2022. Zerlina WANTS \$100 million in government funds to PAY hourly wages to low-income residents if they enroll in job training, vocational training, or educational advancement programs. Zerlina WANTS TO INCENTIVIZE people in need to gain constructive careers, avoid criminal activities, and overcome illegal substance addictions to reduce the power of violent criminals who deal illegal drugs.

III Freeze & Reduce Property Taxes and Sales Taxes

Zerlina WANTS TO FREEZE Cook County property taxes! Taxes are too high! Families can't be forced out of their homes. Zerlina WANTS TO ELIMINATE today's 10.25% Cook County and Illinois sales tax on groceries. Grocery costs are too high!

IV Economic Development, Economic Justice, Affordable Housing and Environmental Sustainability.

Zerlina will HELP businesses solve challenges, expand operations, and create jobs. Zerlina will BRING new financial investment to the 1st District, especially for Maywood and Chicago's Garfield Park community where there are grocery stores. Zerlina will CUT housing costs and apartment rents by CUTTING Cook County property taxes. Property taxes are the biggest obstacle to affordable housing. Zerlina will CALL for full environmental sustainability by Cook County government, residents, and businesses: Recycling, less garbage dumped in landfills, energy efficiency and solar panels.

V More Cook County Government Contracts to Black and Women-Owned Businesses

Zerlina will DEMAND at least 30% of Cook County government contracts are awarded to Black-owned businesses, especially businesses in the 1st District. Zerlina will DEMAND at least 10% of Cook County government contracts go to Women-owned businesses, especially businesses in the 1st District. Zerlina will ASSIST new start-up companies owned by Blacks, women, veterans and the disabled in getting financing and government contracts.

3. How will Zerlina support the community?

Zerlina is not a politician. She is seeking office solely for the purpose of being the voice of the people on the Cook County Board of Commissioners. This is the reason she is running as an Independent Democrat. She is independent of machine politics. She will not be a puppet or rubber stamp on the board, following the lead of longtime political power brokers, or special interest groups with money who seek policies that are against the will of the people. She will be transparent with an open-door policy. She will not support actions that are counter to the wants and demands of the residents. For example, many constituents in the 1st District want programs for migrants defunded, so her position would be counter to those who voted for a budget to support more programs for migrants over underfunded programs for residents. She supports the interest of small business owners who cannot afford a 10-day pay leave for employees because that measure is too expensive for them at this time and could jeopardize the future of their businesses which means more businesses and jobs will be lost in neighborhoods like Austin.