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My Personal Lincoln - Lincoln and Decision-Making

Office Closed 2/13 and 2/20

The 43rd Ward Alderman's Office will be closed today, February 13th in observance of Lincoln's Birthday and Monday, February 20th in observance of President's Day.

Come See Legendary Jazz Trumpeter Rick Braun Perform with the LPHS Orchestra

Don't miss the opportunity **February 17th at 7:00pm** to hear the LPHS Orchestra be the first school orchestra ever to perform with him.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the Lincoln Park High School website.



43rd Ward Office
2523 N. Halsted
www.ward43.org

Office Hours:

Dear Friend,

In one of my favorite cartoons, Charlie Brown is on the pitcher's mound and saying to himself: "It's the last of the ninth. The bases are loaded. There are two out, and the count is three and two on the batter. If I get him out, we win!" Charlie's friends and teammates shout to him, "Throw him a fastball! Throw him a curve!" And so on.

All alone on the pitcher's mound, Charlie thinks to himself, "The world is filled with people who are anxious to serve in an advisory capacity."

As your alderman, my job is to represent your interests - but what happens when it appears that your interests conflict? Or when a decision may be for the common good but harms an individual? To whom should I listen?

As this is Abraham Lincoln's birthday (and mine), I should quote Lincoln on the topic of taking advice. For example, in response to criticism about the ineffective George McClellan, Lincoln asked who should replace the general. "Why, anybody," a senator replied. "*Anybody* will do for you," Lincoln said, "but not for me. I must have *somebody*."

With the fate of the nation and slavery on the line, Lincoln's constituents would sometimes base their arguments on the highest authority. The most famous incident surrounded the visit of a delegation of Chicago ministers who had travelled to Washington to press Lincoln for an early declaration of emancipation. Others lobbied him equally hard against it. Lincoln said, "I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will . . . I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed he would reveal it directly to me."

In the end, Lincoln became famous for his judgment. He was

Monday
9 a.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Friday
9 a.m.-12 p.m. & 2 p.m.-6 p.m.

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known for being practical, non-doctrinal and flexible. "I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; I shall adopt new views so fast as they appear to be true views," he wrote.

Of course, the type of conflicts we encounter here are of a magnitude tiny in comparison to the great struggles facing Lincoln. Yet we still must rely on our judgment in trying to make decisions and forge compromises.

I am lucky that I have constituents who speak with me armed with well-researched facts, background, and arguments. They are willing to hear both sides to help me reason through a difficult decision.

In the end, though, I have to make decisions that my own years of judgment dictate. As Lincoln said,

"I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end . . . I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me."

I hope we all feel the same way.

Sincerely,

43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith

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