



6525 N. Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60626
Office Phone: (773) 761-6688
Fax Phone: (773) 761-6689
<http://VoteForBen.ORG>

Vote For Ben

November, 2015

Dear Neighbor:

Hard to believe it's already time to run for judge again. This will be my second time running and I would appreciate your considering me for your support. In terms of qualifications I feel I'm good to go with some 30 plus years of experience as an attorney, realtor, and contractor; but to be qualified to be a judge takes a lot more than just being book smart or experienced, it also requires a good balance as to equity and fairness.

Ben's CTA Case:

So my sister moved to Washington, D.C. some time ago so her deaf child could attend the country's best deaf school. Recently she came back to Chicago to visit. She was upset when she got here; she had to pay \$ 5 to come into the city from O'Hare Airport, not the usual \$ 2.25.

I looked into it and sure enough, the City recently started charging a "surcharge" at the O'Hare stop. I quickly come to find out there are two sides to it. The guy said it clear, "It's the CTA's train, they can charge as they wish". To which the CTA rider quickly explained to me they have no problem paying for the cost of the train, but this extra fee is unrelated to service. O'Hare city workers should pay the most but don't pay the extra fare at all. They are exempt by City statute. It simply seemed wrong to me and so I sued.

The Federal District Court was quick to find I was all washed up about the matter and ruled in favor of the CTA. I immediately appealed to the higher Court. At the settlement conference, the referee suggested I might lose the case. I felt like Pacquiao (vs. Mayweather) at the weigh in before the big fight. No doubt he was told he might lose, but still he had to try, and try hard. Indeed, I'm trying pretty hard on the appeal.

At first I thought it was about exploiting my sister, but in the end it wasn't. It's about exploiting poor and minority people. For hundreds of years the railroad was the cheapest way to get around. When you double the price of the cheapest fare, all others fares become more affordable by comparison. This means the mayor made the cost of an "Uber" ride more reasonable. That's the same "Uber" the Mayor's brother is believed to own a "piece" of. So, the Mayor's brother benefits at the direct cost of the poor?

Per a recent study, the average American white family has a wealth of over \$100,000 while African American and Latino families have an average wealth of under \$10,000. This seems to mean the O'Hare "surcharge" effectively hurts minorities while making the Mayor's brother richer than he is now.

And so, this case now becomes a question of fairness, exploitation of minorities and basic equality of rights in our country. Are we going forward or backwards with this "surcharge"? Should we encourage the CTA to charge by the stop? I sued. I sued for free. The case is on appeal as we speak.

The "Howard's" in Ben's Life:

The first I inherited from my father, the good. The second was a client that ran a social club, the bad. The last a volunteer from the food pantry, the ugly.

The Good – He was my father’s accountant, a religious Jew. He was borderline retarded, as was his wife and both his children. He had all types of problems: commuting by public transportation, mental and physical health issues and his child being enslaved in Wisconsin.

He was often sloppy in his appearance, had table manners to match that of a horse and mumbled through it all. It was so bad people refused to eat across from him. But he was a good accountant, always was. He had a good moral heart that showed him the clear path time and time again. He taught me the most valuable lesson; that even a simple man can accomplish great things if he goes step by step, one foot in front of the other, slow but sure.

The Bad – Howie was a carnival guy for many years. Ultimately he came to own and rent out carnival equipment. He knew the shady side of business. He knew the secret of serving big tasteless popcorn kernels over the smaller tastier bits that cost five cents more a bag.

I knew him years ago when he was trying to open a social club. He did many bad things. He threatened to cause trouble. He sent authorities to competitors without good cause. He consistently tried to cheat his wife, the government and his workers. He would rather take a big loss than let them “win” or have their way. I myself had to disassociate myself from him, his conduct being so disappointing in totality. He is the perfect example of the person I never want to be. I learned a lot from him.

The Ugly – Not in view, or in picture, but in thoughts and theory. This Howard, current now in my life is a very, very, interesting guy. To say that he and Juan disagree would be very much the understatement. Howard thinks Donald Trump is right on the money with his view on immigration, why haven’t they left yet? He thinks little of African Americans or Latinos as a race and believes their poverty is mostly of their own making. You might say he has many republican ideas.

Howard you might say is “German” and I don’t mean a bit, I mean through and through. He looks German, acts German, and literally “feels” German. True to his character, Howard has a hobby. He is a World War II recreationist. He goes out on the weekend and role-plays being a German General. He is so good at it he has been cast in several movies with small parts playing of course a general. He fits right in, the tourists often ask for his photo. He travels the country enjoying his hobby.

Howard has run the food pantry for years. He runs it like a true “German”, very orderly, very neat, very fair, very do this, take that, many compartments, lots of structure. It’s amazing to watch. Dozens of people move through the place like it’s nothing. He is remarkably fair; he doesn’t care who you are, what color you are, or where you are from; he is consistent, he is grumpy with all. His personal views have no place in the food pantry business, it is clear to see. I wouldn’t dream of replacing him.

We go to lunch often. Recently, I told him it was time for me to run for judge again. He raised his eyes from his bowl of soup and said, “you’d make a good judge, I think.”, and continued eating soup. In that moment it occurred to me that Howard had just done a big thing. He said he was willing to let a nice Jewish boy like myself be a judge. To this very moment it makes me very proud that such a man could even consider such a thing. I think it says loads about Howard and his growth as a person and perhaps just a bit about me.

I consider Howard’s endorsement, hands-down, to be by far the best I will likely ever receive in my life. It took literally years and it’s something I never thought Howard or I could achieve in our lives.

PS -If you happen to know anybody who needs some work gathering signatures please have them contact me as soon as they can as the work will end by Thanksgiving. Until then there is money to be made.

Many thanks,

Ben