



COOK COUNTY CLERK DAVID ORR

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David Orr

Cook County Clerk David Orr serves as the chief election authority for one of the largest election jurisdictions in the country.

A progressive voice in Chicago politics for more than 35 years, Orr led the fight to implement the motor voter law in Illinois, which has made it easier and more convenient for people to sign up to vote. Since taking office in 1990, Orr has returned tens of millions in unspent budget appropriations to the county.

Orr—who served as president of the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC), and a member of the board of advisors to the Election Assistance Committee (EAC)—has played pivotal roles in helping to shape federal and state election reforms.

Orr introduced Early Voting legislation that now allows voters in Illinois to cast their ballots two weeks prior to an election.

He also introduced a statewide law that allows junior and senior high school students to serve as election judges, part of the Clerk's Teen Democracy Program and has used new technology to lay out the county's multiple ballot formats in house, which saves about \$1 million every year. Orr also drafted legislation to merge off-year school board and municipal elections, resulting in a statewide savings of \$7.5 million every other year in election costs.

A former Chicago alderman (1979-1990), Orr served as vice mayor under Mayor Harold Washington. Following Washington's death in 1987, he took over as mayor and was recognized for his strong and sensible leadership during one of the most tumultuous periods in Chicago's political history. While Alderman, Orr introduced and passed many significant reforms including Landlord Tenant Bill of Rights, housing court reforms, sidewalk cafes, an ordinance requiring private clubs to admit women, the city's first major ethics legislation and many others. Additionally, Orr, who doesn't hesitate to challenge the powers that be, also went to Springfield after the infamous midnight pay raises plaguing Chicago and Cook County. He changed the law to require cities and counties to pass pay raises before an elected official takes office – not after.

Orr has traveled internationally delivering lectures regarding election related matters, community organizing, and served as an election monitor in places such as Macedonia and Bangladesh. Before embarking on a career in public service, he was assistant professor of History and Urban Affairs at Mundelein College in Chicago. He continues to teach—currently as a Senior Fellow at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. Orr received his undergraduate degree from Simpson College in Iowa and a master's degree in American Studies from Case Western University in Cleveland where he was a NDEA fellow. He also did further doctoral work at the University of Illinois at Chicago.