



EXHIBIT A

EDUCATION

Lightfoot Campaign Asks CPS Teachers to Encourage Students to Help Her Win Reelection in Return for CreditHeather Cherone | January 11, 2023 5:01 pm

Mayor Lori Lightfoot appears on "Chicago Tonight" on Jan. 3, 2023. (WTTW News)

Mayor Lori Lightfoot's reelection campaign sent an email to Chicago Public Schools teachers Wednesday asking them to encourage their students to volunteer to help Lightfoot win a second term as mayor – and earn class credit.

Thanks to our sponsors:

[View all sponsors](#)

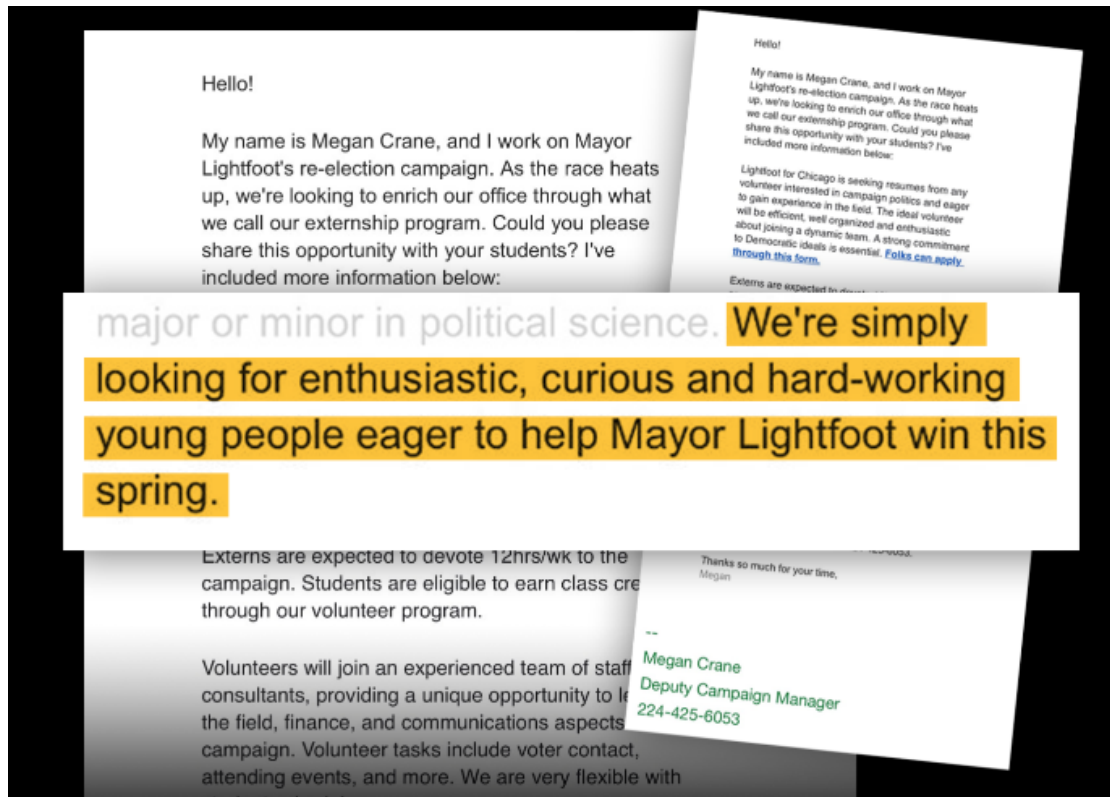
It was unclear how many Chicago teachers received the email from Megan Crane, whose LinkedIn page identifies her as the deputy campaign manager for Lightfoot. The message was sent to teachers' official work email accounts, which end in cps.edu.

The email says participants in the "externship program" would be expected to contribute 12 hours per week to the Lightfoot campaign and students could earn "class credit."

1/11/23, 8:26 PM

Lightfoot Campaign Asks CPS Teachers to Encourage Students to Help Her Win Reelection in Return for Credit | Chicago News | WTTW

“We’re simply looking for enthusiastic, curious and hard-working young people eager to help Mayor Lightfoot win this spring,” according to an email obtained by WTTW News.



A spokesperson for the Lightfoot campaign told WTTW News in a statement that the effort was designed “to provide young people with the opportunity to engage with our campaign, learn more about the importance of civic engagement and participate in the most American of processes” and “done using publicly available contact information.”

As mayor of Chicago, Lightfoot appoints not only the superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools but also the members of the Chicago Board of Education. Chicago’s ethics ordinance prohibits the use of public resources, including email accounts, for non-official purposes.

A Chicago Public Schools spokesperson told WTTW News that “as a rule, the district does not coordinate with any political candidates or campaigns. It has not done so to date and will not be doing so.”



1/11/23, 8:26 PM

Lightfoot Campaign Asks CPS Teachers to Encourage Students to Help Her Win Reelection in Return for Credit | Chicago News | WTTW

Chicago Teachers Union President Stacy Davis Gates told WTTW News the campaign's action was "unethical" and that she was concerned teachers who decline to volunteer for the mayor's campaign, or encourage their students to do so, could face retaliation.

Davis Gates said it was unclear how many teachers received the email, which attorneys for the union believe not only violates the city's government ethics ordinance but also the ethics policy imposed by Lightfoot when she took office in 2019.

The teachers' union has endorsed Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson in the race for mayor. Johnson is a paid staff member of the union.

All employees of the city and its sister agencies are prohibited from engaging in work on behalf of political campaigns while being paid with taxpayer funds. Encouraging their students to volunteer for a particular campaign could violate those rules, and could result in the employees' discipline.

In July, the Chicago Board of Education [rejected a recommendation from Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez to fire two George Washington High School teachers](#) who protested city officials' decision to allow a metal shredding and recycling operation to move from the North Side to the Southeast Side.

Chicago Teachers Union leaders accused Lightfoot of retaliating against Lauren Bianchi and Chuck Stark for protesting the decision to give the parent company of General Iron the green light to move its metal shredding and recycling operation from Lincoln Park to the Southeast Side outside the mayor's Logan Square home.

Political patronage has long plagued all levels of Illinois government, with employees' jobs often hinging on their political activities in support of – or against – specific political candidates. The practice – which gave the Chicago machine much of its power – has been outlawed after a series of court decisions that forced government agencies to reform their practices.

Lightfoot ran for mayor in 2019 on a platform promising to root out corruption at City Hall and toughen the city's ethics regulations in an attempt to break the grip of the city's "corrupt political machine."

Election Day is Feb. 28. If no candidate gets more than 50% of the vote, a runoff between the top two candidates will take place on April 4.

Contact Heather Cherone: [@HeatherCherone](#) | (773) 569-1863 | hcherone@wttw.com

