



**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL ELECTION 2009**

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questions related to Council and election reform policy issues facing the City of New York. We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire on our website and in other appropriate venues.

Citizens Union will also be using your answers to guide the process of evaluating candidates for this office and to assist us in determining whether to issue a candidate "endorsement."

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: TONY BAKER Age: 51

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 49TH

Campaign Address: 2031 FOREST AVE. SI, NY 10503

Campaign Telephone Number: (118) 554-6127 Fax: (718) 442-7946  
DOWNES-TAYLOR

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Shanda Downes-Taylor

Website & Email: hbsr1957@yahoo.com / BAKER09.COM ~~hbsr1957@yahoo.com~~  
BAKERCAMPAIGN@GMAIL.COM ~~hbsr1957@yahoo.com~~

Education: Graduate degree

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): PASTOR, ST PHILIPS BAPTIST CHURCH

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:  
TRUSTEE - RICHMOND UNIV. MEDICAL CTR.; COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC  
RICHMOND, VP; EXECUTIVE BOARD NAACP; EXEC. DIRECTOR, W.M. A. EPPS COMMUNITY CTR.

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES  NO   
(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Preferred Candidate" and "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Signature of Candidate: [Signature] Date: Jan 23, 09

**I. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

Please state your position on the following reform measures. Specify whether you support or oppose each. You may elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.

**VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM**

- 1. What is your position on allowing independents to vote in party primaries? Support/Oppose

Comments: I oppose independents voting in party primaries because it was their choice not to choose a party and therefore should not be afforded that opportunity.

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- 2. What is your position on passage of state legislation that would allow referenda initiated by the City Council and/or the public to appear on the ballot at the same time as a referendum initiated by a charter commission appointed by the Mayor? Support/Oppose

Comments: I support because the City Council should have the power to put issues to the voters of NYC when issues and policies directly affect them.

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- 3. What is your position on increasing the pay of Election Day poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event? Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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- 4. What is your position on requiring that the Board of Elections in the City of New York be included in the preliminary and final mayor's management report? Support/Oppose

Comments:        If the Mayor has oversight over the BOE then it should be included in the MMR. However, the issue of Mayoral oversight for the BOE has some potential conflict of interests.

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**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

- 5. What is your position on establishing stricter requirement for the Support/Oppose

disbursement of campaign finance matching funds to candidates that face non-competitive challengers?

Comments: I do agree but the definition of non competitive needs to be very clear.

6. What is your position on banning the transfer of funds that were raised in a previous election cycle into a current account?

Support/Oppose

Comments: I do support banning the transfer of funds but strongly believe the we should closely analyze the program and determine how much it really costs to run an effective and competitive campaign.

7. What is your position on allowing campaign financing for ballot proposals?

Support/Oppose

Comments: I do Support However, it needs to be explored as to who can put initiatives on the ballot and the process that entails.

8. What is your position on lowering the campaign contribution limit for City Council candidates from the current \$2,750 for those who participate in the city's campaign finance program?

Support/Oppose

Comments:

9. What is your position on lowering the expenditure limit for City Council candidates who participate in the city's campaign finance program?

Support/Oppose

Comments: I oppose because expenditures can vary based upon the dynamics of the race.

**CITY COUNCIL REFORM**

10. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case?

Support/Oppose

- Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?

Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your position on eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions?

Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_ I oppose eliminating stipends but it should be equitable across the board.

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees?

Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_ It appears to me there is duplicity in the overall committee structure. We should carefully examine the implications of consolidating.

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your position on the recent extension of term limits for the city's elected officials to three consecutive four-year terms? Please explain your answer.

Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_ I support the concept of term limits however, the decision should be left to the voters and not the Mayor or City Council.

\_\_\_\_\_

14. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that changes to term limits may only be approved by the voters?

Support/Oppose

Comments: \_\_\_ I support and feel it should be codified.

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**POLICY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE**

15. What is your position on transferring prosecutorial power over

Support/Oppose

substantiated claims of police misconduct to the Civilian Complaint Review Board? If oppose, what would you propose to ensure sufficient public oversight and effective adjudication in handling claims of alleged police misconduct?

Comments: We need an independent review board that reports directly to the DA with their findings of any allegations.

16. Do you believe that the State Legislature should renew mayoral control of the city's public schools in its present form? If oppose, what specific changes to the current system would you recommend? Support/Oppose

Comments: I believe the school system needs to be decentralized and coordinated in a way that derives more inclusive education not just teach to test. The system should also be easier for parents to navigate.

17. What is your position on establishing mandatory inclusionary zoning standards and requirements for all new residential development projects? If so, what should be the minimum percentage set aside for low income households? Support/Oppose

Comments: I believe that percentage set asides for low income households should range between 20% - 45%. However, since the size and scale of a project varies, percentages will also need to be variable.

18. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to limit the role of community-based planning? Support/Oppose

Comments:

19. What is your position on the Ravitch Commission's recommendations for new revenue sources for funding the MTA and altering its governance? Please explain your answer, as well as your thoughts on how the experiences of the debate surrounding the city's efforts to implement congestion pricing can inform the current discussion. Support/Oppose

Comments: I oppose this because the commissions recommendations are a fool's attempt to balance the states budget shortfall on the backs of the poor and working class in NYC. The suggestion that tolls on East River bridges is a solution to traffic congestion (as stated in Mayor Bloomberg's NYC congestion plan) and reinvigorated by the Ravitch commission is nothing more

than class warfare against residents in the outer boroughs who need these bridges to commute into Manhattan. Also the commission's recommendation to add a fare hike on the Verrazano bridge to Staten Islanders who already pays the highest toll on any bridge in the State of NY is deplorable.

The Ravitch commission needed to explore the internal agency cuts by suspending certain capital projects and or finding significant fat within the agencies operating budget before turning the budget axe towards New Yorkers. I also believe that the MTA and all public authorities should not operate autonomously and should be regulated with direct oversight from the legislature.

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**CAMPAIGN PROMISES BEING MADE TO VOTERS IN 2009**

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of incumbents running for re-election. In addition to evaluating their stances on the issues above, Citizens Union will assess incumbents on how well they kept the promises they made to voters during the previous election.

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing what are the top five promises you are making to the voters during this campaign?

We thank you very much for your response. Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient.

**TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES BEING MADE IN 2009**

1. **\_I pledge to create a Healthcare taskforce for the 49<sup>th</sup> District. To form recommendations on addressing the healthcare crisis among Staten Islanders.**\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. **\_\_I will also hire a director of Community Development within my office to work solely with Non-profit agencies to access agency and foundation grants. We will work with small business development groups, LDC's, BID's and economic development agencies to focus on job creation throughout the district.**\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **\_My goal as City Councilman is to obtain healthcare funding for more Primary Care facilities on Staten Island**\_\_\_\_\_



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4. **\_\_\_To organize a floating constituent service system that will provide access to the City Council for all communities of the 49<sup>th</sup> district. We will create partnerships with local non-profit's and CBO's and I will assign a full time staffer to the council office that will perform constituent intake and assessment throughout the district 3 days a week. This will remove the red tape and bureaucracy currently in place which makes access to your City Councilman to voice your issues unattainable. This new service system will allow me to hear first hand, the issues and concerns of my district, be accessible to my communities and allow me to connect, respond and work on real resolutions.**
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**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee  
299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007  
or via fax to 212.227.0345**