



Page 1 of 10

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

Citizens Union would appreciate your responses to the following questions related to policy issues facing the City of New York that are of concern to Citizens Union and the citizens of the City. We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire in our Voters Directory, on our website, and in other appropriate venues. Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union will use to evaluate candidates who are running for office in order to determine our "Preferred Candidates" for the primary election and "Endorsed Candidates" for the general election. In order to receive Citizens Union's "preferred" or "endorsed" status, in addition to completing the questionnaire, candidates must participate in an interview with Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee.

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: G. Oliver Koppell Age: 68

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 11

Campaign Address: 5911 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 543-2310 Fax: (718) 543-2156

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Arthur Heller

Website & Email: http://www.koppell2009.com koppell2009@gmail.com

Education: Public school, Bronx High School of Science, '58; Harvard College, Cum Laude '62; Harvard Law School, Cum Laude '65

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Council Member, 2002-present; Attorney

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Member of Assembly, 1970-1993; Attorney General of New York State, 1994; President, Community School Board 10, 1999-2001; Volunteer Arbitrator, Small Claims Part, Civil Court of the City of New York

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES NO

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES NO

(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Preferred Candidate" and "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed. We will make every effort to interview candidates in each race for City Council.)

Signature of Candidate:  Date: 7/31/09

Citizens Union • 299 Broadway New York, NY 10007
phone 212-227-0342 • fax 212-227-0345 • citizens@citizensunion.org • www.citizensunion.org
Peter J.W. Sherwin, Chair • Dick Dadey, Executive Director

I. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

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|---|--------------|-------------|
| 1. What is your position with respect to allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries? | Support | Oppose
X |
| 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
X | Oppose |
| 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
X |
| 4. What is your position on restructuring New York's current board of elections model to eliminate political party responsibility for overall election administration and replace it with a system that narrows political party involvement to certification of candidate petitions and the actual counting of votes? | Support
X | Oppose |
| 5. What is your position on having an election administration system where there is a local elections executive director appointed by the mayor upon recommendation by a new board that is chosen by the mayor and the city council? | Support
X | Oppose |

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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|---|---------|--------|
| 6. What is your position on implementing "war chest" restrictions that would prohibit a candidate from transferring funds raised in a previous election cycle into a current campaign committee for a different office? | Support | Oppose |
|---|---------|--------|

7. What is your position on allowing campaign financing for ballot proposals?	Support X	Oppose
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CITY COUNCIL REFORM

8. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case?	Support X	Oppose
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a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs?	Support X	Oppose
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b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	Support X	Oppose
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c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	Support X	Oppose
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9. What is your position on:

a. limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income?	Support	Oppose X
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b. making the job of councilmember a full-time position?	Support	Oppose X
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c. eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions?	Support	Oppose X
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10. What is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation not affect those serving in the current term of the council and only be applied prospectively to the following term?	Support X	Oppose
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11. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees?	Support	Oppose X
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12. What is your position on term limits for elected officials?	Support	Oppose X
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13. 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 X
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|---|--------------|--------|
| 14. 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
X | Oppose |
|---|--------------|--------|

I have always been against term limits on principle. I voted in favor of the extension because I believe if New Yorkers are happy with their elected officials, they should be able to keep them in office.

POLICY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Please state your position on the following issues by indicating whether you support or oppose each, where applicable. Please also use the space provided below each question or on a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the questions which require a detailed answer. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

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|---|--------------|-------------|
| 15. Knowing that the police department and commissioner retain ultimate authority for determining whether an officer is guilty and penalty, what is your position on transferring power to the Civilian Complaint Review Board to prosecute cases of police misconduct, such as force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and offensive language? | Support
X | Oppose |
| 16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning? | Support | Oppose
X |
| 17. What is your position regarding the creation of a Charter Revision Commission to review specifically the roles of the various offices of government and how well government has functioned since the 1988 and 1989 charter review commissions? | Support | Oppose |
| 18. What is your position on reforming the current pension funding structure to create multiple tiers for future city government employees? | Support | Oppose |

- a. In FY 2008-09, New York City spent \$12 billion on pensions and fringe benefits for City employees out of a total budget of \$62 billion. What would you do to address the growing pension costs borne by the city and New York City tax payers?

We should consider revising pension rights for new employees in negotiation with public employees unions.

- 19. What is your position with respect to the City Council passing a resolution calling upon the State Legislature to establish a State Constitutional Convention?

Support	Oppose
	X

- a. If support, what are the three most important areas that need improvement?

- b. Do you believe that greater home rule should be granted to the City of New York? If so, in what areas should further sovereignty be given?

Yes, greater home rule should be given to New York City, particularly with respect to education and rent regulation, as well as regulations for public safety and consumer protection.

- 20. Taking into consideration the lessons learned from the debates surrounding congestion pricing and the Ravitch Commission's recommendations to provide the MTA with long-term funding, what would you propose to address the MTA's fiscal solvency issues and ensure that the burden for funding the MTA is equitably distributed among all stakeholders?

We should have a "fair fare" policy with riders paying no more than fifty percent of the cost of the ride. The monies for subsidies should be available from state and city budgets and special taxes.

21. What would you propose in terms of creating a greater role for the city council in determining and deciding the city budget?

The City Council should be able to develop its own revenue estimates.

22. What is your position regarding the City's past practice of using surplus tax revenues to pay down future health cost and pension obligations, and the decision not to do so this year?

Where there is a budget surplus, this is a good practice. This year, in face of a deficit, it was proper not to put aside money.

23. What is your view of how the taxes paid by New Yorkers compare to the value that is received in City services? Do you believe that taxes should be raised or lowered? To the extent you believe taxes should be changed, please provide specific proposals about what taxes you would raise and what services you would cut, if you didn't raise taxes, listed in order of greatest magnitude.

I believe that as a general matter, citizens get appropriate value for their tax payments. I am opposed to tax increases. Indeed, if the economy improves, I would lower property and sales taxes. The income tax system should be made more progressive.

24. Many policy advocates champion the creation of a more diversified economy, and one that is less reliant on Wall Street. What is your position on such a plan? If you support it, what would you do to diversify the city's economy? How would you adjust spending in New York City to accommodate the anticipated reduction in tax revenue as the tax base shifts to lower paying jobs?

I do not favor taking action that would discourage financial sector activity and employment. We should, however, encourage new industries such as biotech, information technology and other innovative industries. We should provide tax incentives and even incubator low-rent space. We should also encourage the hospitality industry and improve our convention facilities.

25. What would you propose the Department of Education do to increase the ability for parents and teachers to become more meaningfully involved in the education system? What other positive changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

I support greater parental involvement and reinstatement of school district structuring. The role of community education councils should be enhanced.

26. What would you propose to increase the transparency of the Board of Elections in the City of New York's operations and accountability to the city and its voters?

The operations of the Board of Elections should be fully accessible to public review.

27. What would you propose to further enhance transparency regarding the relationships between council members, their families, and nonprofits that receive funding from New York City?

The recent reforms in disclosure should provide full transparency. If they do not, they should be further expanded.



CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

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 an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- a. what were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current position and what progress have you made to keep those promises, and why and why not have you met them?
- b. what are your top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position?

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 FROM 2005 AND ACTION ON THEM

1. Reduce school overcrowding - Three new schools being built.

2. A new library for Kingsbridge - Library under construction.

3. Protect senior citizens - All senior citizen centers open and funded.

4. Encourage recycling - Participated in passing electronic recycling laws.

5. Limit development - Rezoning of most of district completed.

TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. Protect public safety and maintain fire and police manpower.
2. Continue to protect senior centers and senior programming.
3. Responsibly manage the budget in the face of recession.
4. Bring new schools to the Kingsbridge Armory site.
5. Protect air quality and reduce automobile reliance.

