



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

Candidate Name: Margaret S. Chin Age: 56

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 1

Campaign Address: 215 Park Row, Suite #2 NY NY 10003

Campaign Telephone Number: (917) 359-1455 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): D Campaign Manager Name: Jake Itzkowitz

Website & Email: www.MargaretChin.com MargaretChin2009@gmail.com

Education: BS in Education, CCNY

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Community Organizer; Educator; Deputy Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality

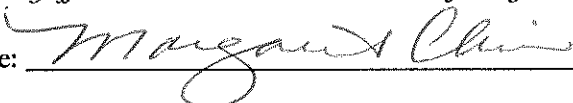
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Chairperson, NY Immigration Coalition. Board member, Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD) chair - Advocacy Committee. Founding member, Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation (CPLDC) & vice-chair of the board. Chair of Census Bureau's Race and Ethnicity Advisory Committee on the Asian and Pacific Islander Population for Census 2000. Member, Community Boards 1 & 3. Founding members of Asian Americans for Equality, President of the board from 1982 to 1986.

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES

(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: 7/20/09

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

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| 8. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case? | Support | Oppose |
| a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? | Support | Oppose |
| b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? | Support | Oppose |
| c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? | Support | Oppose |
| 9. What is your position on: | | |
| a. limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income? | Support | Oppose |
| b. making the job of councilmember a full-time position? | Support | Oppose |
| c. eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? | Support | Oppose |
| 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 | Oppose |
| 11. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees? | Support | Oppose |
| 12. What is your position on term limits for elected officials? | Support | Oppose |
| 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 |

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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 | Oppose |
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I was strongly opposed to the extension of term limits and the overturning of the will of the voters. New Yorkers spoke twice on the issue, and should be the ones to decide on the issue, not the City Council and the Mayor.

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 | Oppose |
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| 16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning? | Support | Oppose |
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| 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 |
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| 18. What is your position on reforming the current pension funding structure to create multiple tiers for future city government employees? | Support | Oppose |
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- 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?

First and foremost, the City should treat its workers fairly. We need to focus on worker training and strive to create a more productive workforce.

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**

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

Housing- New York City should be able to make decisions about rent stabilization, vacancy decontrol, and other affordable housing issues. Urstadt and other housing laws should be eliminated, and housing should be the purview of the New York City Council.

Education- Mayoral control and the Department of Education are issues for New York City, not for Albany. Educational decisions should be made here, in City Hall.

Taxation- Why should New York City's budget be subject to the vagaries of Albany and the Senate insanity? New York City and the Council should have the right to set, raise, and reduce taxes on New Yorkers.

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- Home rule on Housing and Education are essential.

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?

Firstly, I have major problems with the way that the MTA is run. We need stronger internal controls on the MTA's expenditures. The Agency should rely less on outside contractors, who bleed money from the public system. And we need a more sensible approach to overall transit. A start would be to return to two-way tolls on the Verrazano Bridge. This should be coupled with discounts for carpools and small business commuters.

What killed Congestion pricing was a failure to see a system-wide framework. We need a policy change where the MTA and the City use fees generated from tolls and road use in a central area to fund public transportation alternatives in the outer boroughs, reducing congestion and pollution while improving infrastructure and environmentally sound, fiscally secure methods of transit.

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

City Council members should review proposed capital budget allocations related to their committees and districts, and vote on them independently. Members should also be responsible for reviewing proposed budgets within each agency and its offices and departments located within their districts. Moreover, the Council should develop a long-term set of budget priorities, rather than working on year-to-year political and electoral funding schemes.

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?

Using surplus tax revenues to pay down future obligations such as health costs and pension fees should be continued. Using the excuse that we are in dire financial straits ignores the reality of rising future costs and future financial concerns. The surplus should also have been used to invest in job creation programs and to help small businesses, with an eye towards generating future tax revenues to maintain the program.

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 taxes should be raised on individuals earning more than \$250,000 a year. Under Mayor Bloomberg, New York has become a playground for the rich, and many low- and middle-income families have been pushed out. Given our current economic situation, I feel that we should make the tax system more fair and progressive, and charge a realistic cost for living in New York.

I do not believe that our tax dollars should be used to subsidize luxury development.

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?

We need to do more as a City to support local small business. Small businesses are the backbone of New York, and especially of our neighborhoods across the City. The Council should also demand from businesses that get City contracts to pay living wages and to provide their employees with benefits.

In terms of City revenue, I think it is important to preserve wages and benefits to City workers. One of the ways that the City could re-adjust revenue would be to reduce the reliance on outside contractors and consultants, and to reduce spending on other 'outside' fees.

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 positives changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

I support the proposals of the Parent Commission on School Governance and Mayoral Control, establishing a more independent and responsive Board of Education. (15 members with limited terms of whom 3 are appointed by the Mayor, 1 by Public Advocate, 1 by the City Council, and 6 by parent representatives elected by community district Education Councils.

The Mayor cannot be the sole authority over the Department of Education, and the Chancellor must be accountable to parents and voters.

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?

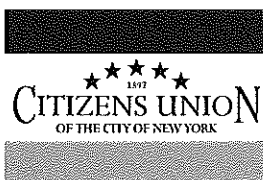
First of all, Election Day poll workers should be hired independently from the political parties and trained to assist voters in a friendly, competent manner. The Board as a whole is largely staffed based on a partisan system which often creates problems for candidates, favors incumbents, and makes it difficult for reform-minded candidates to succeed in elections.

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?

Besides filing the Conflict of Interest Board, candidates should be required to list relationships that they have with Council members, their families, and any companies or non-profit organizations doing business with the City. Further, member items must be listed well in advance, and should be scrutinized by an independent agency, and Council members should be forced to provide detailed documentation of proven results or track record for supporting any member items as friendly in the budget.

Additional Comments:

I am a progressive, liberal Democrat. I firmly believe that government should work for the people, be accountable to the people and firmly place people's needs first. When elected to the City Council, I will open regular communications between government agencies and elected officials with our communities and will bridge the divide between government policies, their applications and their impact on residents. I will work with advocates and community leaders to ensure that government is accessible. I will pursue my principles of accountability, accessibility, and efficiency of government in working on the issues of preserving and creating more affordable homes for New Yorkers, increasing parental involvement in educating our children, building better communities through comprehensive community planning processes, ensuring public safety and creating and sustaining living wages for New Yorkers.



CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of candidates running for office. As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing your top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position.

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises to evaluate your performance while in office, as well as, to evaluate your candidacy in the future.

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

TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. Preserve & Build Affordable Housing
2. Increase parental involvement & input in the Education system
3. Assistance for small businesses to keep them working & employing New Yorkers
4. Increase access to government services and agencies, and improve transparency of agencies to the public and their consultation with new Yorkers & communities
5. Maintain & create family-sustaining wages & benefits and create jobs