



**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.

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Candidate Name: Peter F. Vallone Jr.

Age: 48

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 22

Campaign Address: 22-45 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Astoria, NY 11105

Campaign Telephone Number: 718-274-0007 Fax: 718-274-6060 (FAX)

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Campaign Manager Name: Alexis Confer

Website & Email: [www.petervallone.com](http://www.petervallone.com) and [vallone4ny@gmail.com](mailto:vallone4ny@gmail.com)

Education: BA, Fordham and Law Degree, Fordham

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office: 8 years NYC Council

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Council Member,

District 22

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: 7/30/09

Citizens Union • 299 Broadway New York, NY 10007

phone 212-227-0342 • fax 212-227-0345 • [citizens@citizensunion.org](mailto:citizens@citizensunion.org) • [www.citizensunion.org](http://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

- |   |         |                         |
|---|---------|-------------------------|
| 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?<br><i>- But, would seriously consider non-partisan elections</i> | 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?<br><i>- would seriously consider upon final proposal</i>                           | Support | Oppose <i>undecided</i> |

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

- |   |         |        |
|---|---------|--------|
| 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 Oppose *undecided*

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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 Oppose
- a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? Support Oppose *undecided*
- 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 *undecided*
- 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 *undecided*

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

See attached op-ed.

**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.

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 *undecided*

16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning?

Support

Oppose

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?

**multi-tier system, pension reform, and more oversight and prosecution of pension fraud**

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?

**Election Reform  
Budget Reform  
Electric Power Distribution**

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, all areas. I support seceding from New York State.**

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?

**Increased oversight and accountability, contract reform, fair share of funding from NY State (NYC has 80% of the ridership, but receives only 60% of funding)**

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

**The Council should have the same power as the state legislature, which includes the ability to estimate revenues.**

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?

**I support paying down debt whenever possible.**

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 support lowering taxes and a small government and believe my priorities have been made clear over the last 8 years.**

**As I have stated many times, we need pension and Medicaid reform and our fair share of state funding (Albany owes us \$14 billion). If this occurs, there's absolutely no reason to raise taxes or cut services.**

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 will continue to fight hard for the creation of green jobs in NYC, which will expand employment options for all income brackets.**

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?

**As a parent of 2 girls in public schools, I support more parental involvement, which would include truly independent parent coordinators. I also support Mayoral control.**

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?

**I am presently introducing a Resolution calling for reform of the entire petitioning process.**

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?

**I introduced a resolution to amend the Council Rules that will ban contributions from Council Members to groups employing family or staff.**



## **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.

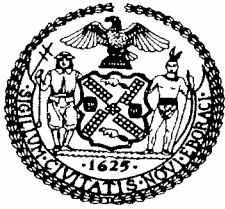
### **TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES FROM 2005 AND ACTION ON THEM**

**To make our streets safer, cleaner and improve our schools. Progress has been made on each. (see questionnaire above)**

### **TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES**

**To make even more progress toward fulfilling 2005 promises.**

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER PETER F. VALLONE JR.**



22-45 31st Street  
Astoria, NY 11105  
Phone 718-274-4500  
Fax 718-726-0357

*For immediate release*

Contact: Andrew Moesel 718-274-4500  
Cell: 419-656-5755

**VALLONE OP-ED ON SUPPORT OF EXTENDING  
TERM LIMITS**

After much deliberation, I cast my vote to extend term limits for city office holders from two to three. This is one of the most difficult decisions I've ever had to make. There are good people and good policies on either side of this issue. I have carefully considered both the pros and cons, weighing every opinion I've heard.

At its core, this is a debate between the practical application of our government and the Democratic ideals that are its foundation. While I believe, and most people agree, that a referendum on Election Day would have been the best way to alter term limits, at this point it is not feasible. A special election would not only cost \$15 million, but also take at least 6 months to go through the charter revision process culminating in approval by the Justice Department. With the change in the presidential Administration, federal agencies will not even be staffed until February, likely pushing a ruling on an election into the summer. This uncertainty would cause government paralysis during these trying times.

The question then becomes, should the infeasibility of a special election preclude leaders from making a huge improvement in government by altering, not overturning, the result of a flawed referendum? While most voters may not appreciate the problem with a two term limit, I must stress how severely it handicaps the legislature as a counterweight to the mayor and as an efficient governing body. No government expert I heard in over 20 hours of hearings believed that two terms is better than three (and most believe that none is better than three). When my father was Speaker, he stopped Rudy Guiliani from moving Yankee Stadium from The Bronx to Manhattan. Today, with the Speaker either a freshman or a lame duck, such opposition would be impossible. In addition, as it takes many years to plan and to complete a capital project –such as a park or ball field, bridge or tunnel – two terms hurts improvements to local neighborhoods and city infrastructure.

I understand and respect the argument that elected officials should respect the will of the voters, but those same voters elected me to act in the city's best interests. It is easy to make grandiose speeches about democratic ideals, citing flowery quotes from history. It is much harder to do the responsible thing and to make controversial decisions about the nuts and bolts of civic policy. At this moment in time, during this crisis, I believe it is far better to allow voters to choose experienced government officials at the polls than deny



them that choice. If they disagree with me, and I'm sure many will, they will have their own referendum on my decision at the polls next year.

For the record, this is not a decision I wanted to make, but one that was thrust upon me. My decision is not politically expedient for me. Now that this vote has passed, I have closed the door to a borough-wide office that I believe was a very good possibility. I did not make this decision because of how it affected me personally or any other individual, but I based it on what I felt was best for all people in the city.

As the political grandstanders move on to look for their next 15 minutes of fame, I hope we can focus on a respectful discourse between the good people on both sides of this issue and start to turn our attention to the serious business of running New York City – now better armed to deal with the trying times ahead.

## **Council Member Peter F. Vallone Jr. Bio (2009)**

Council Member Peter F. Vallone Jr. represents Astoria and the surrounding communities in the New York City Council and serves as **Chair of the Public Safety Committee**. As Chair, he has **led the fight to stop cuts to the NYPD and put more officers in our local precincts**. He has introduced legislation to **keep illegal guns off the streets** and out of the hands of domestic violence offenders; to **abolish the statute of limitations on child abuse offenders and rapists**; and to make our **anti-graffiti laws the toughest in the country**. Vallone is leading the fight to get New York City the money it deserves from the state and federal governments so that New Yorkers will continue to be protected from criminals and terrorists.

As an **Assistant District Attorney with the Manhattan District Attorney's** office for over six years, Vallone successfully prosecuted various street crime matters and compiled an impressive trial record of **40 top count convictions against one acquittal**.

As the father of two girls attending public school, he knows firsthand how important it is that every child has a **safe learning environment**. He wrote the law that **put security cameras in all New York City public schools**. He is a sponsor of legislation which would require the New York City Department of Education to provide security measures for nonpublic schools, which would **allow schoolchildren to carry cellular phones to and from school for safety purposes**. In addition to safety, he has given **millions of dollars** to local schools **to improve facilities, install computers and ensure that afterschool programming** serves the children.

Dubbed, **'The Man Who Hates Graffiti,'** by the **New York Times** and **'Graffiti Public Enemy No. 1'** by the **Staten Island Advance**, Vallone has waged a war against graffiti vandals. Recognized around the world as an anti-graffiti crusader, Vallone's legislation has made it illegal to sell graffiti tools to minors and imposed a requirement that affects larger buildings and stores to clean graffiti from their property. Most recently, the Council overwhelmingly passed Vallone's bill restricting the sale of etching acid. As the **NYT** recently said, **"Mr. Vallone might be to graffiti what Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani was to squeegee men."**

He has been honored for his work to protect our most vulnerable, which includes awards from the **Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City**, the **Immaculate Conception Youth Program (ICYP)**, the **League of Humane Voters**, and countless other organizations.

As Pro Bono Counsel to C.H.O.K.E. (Coalition Helping Organize a Kleaner Environment), Vallone **led the fight against the proliferation of power plants** and represented C.H.O.K.E. and Astoria residents in court, winning a major victory against the New York Power Authority that **lead to the closing of the Charles Poletti Power Plant in 2010, the worst polluter in the city**. Vallone also **wrote the landmark Plastic Bag Recycling Act**, which established film and plastic bag recycling in New York City.

Vallone has been remarkably successful in bringing back resources and funding to the community because of the respect he has generated from his colleagues and peers.

- *Mayor Michael Bloomberg* – “[Vallone was] **one of the first people I met when I decided to look at what public service would be like. He is a role model for all of us.**”

- *City Council Speaker Christine Quinn* – **“Like a dog with a bone when it comes to fighting against graffiti and for his neighborhood.”**
- *Queens Borough President Helen Marshall* – **“He’s doing a great job for our borough, for our city, and for our nation... and the most important thing is to be safe. Don’t mess with our safety or you’ll have to deal with this guy, he’s not going to tolerate it. Don’t we love him for that?”**
- *District Attorney Richard Brown* – **“He’s the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee of the City Council and together with the Mayor has been great in helping us keep our streets safe and to improve the quality of life within the county.”**

An accomplished athlete, Vallone was invited to play against the Chinese National Ping-Pong team on ABC's Wide World of Sports, was Co-Captain of the Astoria Civic City Champion Football and Softball teams and continues to play as much indoor and beach volleyball as his busy schedule permits. He is also a professional musician, playing four instruments and an avid scuba diver. Vallone was born and raised in Astoria, Queens. He graduated *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from Fordham College and from Fordham Law School. He has two daughters, Catherine and Caroline.