



**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: Mark S. Weprin Age: 48

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: NYC Councilmember Council District #: 23

Campaign Address: 73-20 Bell Boulevard, Oakland Gardens, NY 11364

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 468-4860 Fax: ()

Party Affiliation(s): D,WFP, I Campaign Manager Name: Dirk McCall

Website & Email: markweprin.com, mark@markweprin.com

Education: SUNY Albany, BA, Brooklyn Law, JD

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): 15 Years, New York State Assembly

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: NYS Assembly – 15 years

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: Mark Weprin Date: 7/16/09



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Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

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? | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | 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

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------|
| 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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
|---|-----------------------|--------|

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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |

- | | | |
|---|---------|---------------|
| 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 | <u>Oppose</u> |
|---|---------|---------------|

No change should have taken place without a referendum. The voters have already spoken twice and overruling them without returning the issue to the voters was wrong.

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

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?

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- Education, taxation, housing

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?

Commuter tax, broad based fees that do not discriminate against Queens residents

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

Conference Committees

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?

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.

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?

Yes, I am the sponsor of the Biotech tax credit. I chair the Small Business Committee in the NYS Assembly and hope to make NYC more small business friendly.

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?

Strong superintendents creating real accountability and increasing parent involvement in decision making.

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 have been a leading advocate for open campaign finance records.

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?

They should be banned for giving to groups that directly impact or employ family members.

Additional Comments:

Many of these questions are not yes/no questions. I have thought deeply about these issues and look forward to discussing them in my interview. I am passionate about transparency in government and ensuring accountability and would greatly value the Citizens Union endorsement



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 currently holds an office other than the one for which you are running,

- 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 or why have you not fulfilled those promises?
- b. what are your top five campaign promises you are making to voters during your campaign for this new 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. N/A

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

- 1. Continue to advocate for open government**
- 2. Be a parent's advocate on the Council**
- 3. Support fully funding Campaign Finance Law**
- 4. Be an environmental leader**
- 5. Strongly advocate for programs that keep seniors in their homes**