



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: Albert Vann Age: 74

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 36

Campaign Address: 1424 Fulton Street Brooklyn, NY 11216

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 604-9720 Fax: (718) 604-2116

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: Mandela Jones

Website & Email: www.alvann2009.com bkvann2009@gmail.com

Education: Franklin K. Lane HS, B.B.A. - Toledo University, MA. in Education - Yeshiva University, M.A. in Guidance and Counseling - Long Island University

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office):
7+ years in City Council

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:
New York State Assembly Member (56th District), Public School teacher and administrator

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: Albert Vann Date: 8/7/09

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

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. What is your position with respect to allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries? | Support | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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
<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? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Support | Oppose |
|---|--|--------|

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

Support

Oppose

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

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

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

Please see attached.

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

I am a co-sponsor of Int. 1048

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

Undecided

- 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?

I do not have a definite plan.

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, I believe New York City should have the ability to impose or adjust taxes.

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?

I support the Ravitch Plan minus tolls on the East River bridges.

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

There should be an agreement between the Mayor and Council on both revenues and expenditures.

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 agree with this past practice.

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 paid by New Yorkers provide for a significant value in services received. However, there are always service areas that can be improved upon and provide greater value to taxpayers. To maintain city services, I would agree to a personal income tax on those earning \$500,000 or more.

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 believe it is necessary for New York City to gradually shift from reliance on Wall Street. The City must cultivate and support the development of new thriving industries in NYC.

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?

Parents should be involved in the selection of the Superintendent of their school district and superintendents should be re-empowered.

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?

~~Also~~ I would propose that the City Council have increased authority.

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?

Current policies with respect to this ~~are~~ seem adequate.

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. ~~Majority camp~~
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

14) I voted for the extension of term limits, because I do not believe in any term limits for an elected office. I feel that elections are the appropriate mechanism for removing elected officials from office. While I have a problem with the way Mayor Bloomberg used his power and influence to garner support for an opportunity to seek a third term, I made my decision to support the legislation based on my guiding principle; what is in the long-term best interest of my community.

2005 CAMPAIGN PROMISES AND ACTION ON THEM

- 1. Representing my community and constituents to the very best of my ability** – I believe that in my 7+ years in the City Council, I have provided effective representation for my community and constituents. Together with community leaders, we have increased the affordable housing stock, while protecting our community from unscrupulous developers. We have rezoned the southern section of Bedford-Stuyvesant and completed the first-phase of designating Crown Heights North as a historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. These will protect the District from out of character development, and will allow for higher development on major thoroughfares, provided that it includes affordable housing.
- 2. Building and supporting community institutions and organizations** – Throughout my time in government, I have always supported the development of local community institutions because I feel that the strength of institutions within the community will have a strong influence on the health of the community. Local institutions can outlast individuals in providing effective services to a community. This is why I have focused on securing funding for the many institutions of the 36th Council District during my time in the City Council. I have been able to provide significant support for community development/housing organizations, community health centers and organizations, and community parks, among many other community institutions. I have also provided leadership in creating and supporting local community taskforces on economic development, education, public safety and seniors. These taskforces have worked towards finding and implementing solutions to issues the community faces, while also attracting outside resources in support of their efforts.
- 3. Placing major emphasis on parental advocacy and leadership training, and supporting public schools in my District** – Since 2005, I have provided funding and other support to the 36th Council District Education Taskforce and Center for Law and Social Justice to assist and empower parents in becoming advocates. I have also supported the schools in my District with millions of dollars in capital funding for building upgrades, computer and science labs, and playgrounds.

2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

I will make the same commitment to my community that I made in 2005.

