



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: MELVIN BROWN Age: 56

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 37

Campaign Address: 1168 MADISON STREET BROOKLYN NY 11221

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 400-3276 Fax: ( )
INDEPENDENCE

Party Affiliation(s): Campaign Manager Name: B. J. WILLIAMS

Website & Email: WWW.MELVINBROWNFORCITYCOUNCIL.ORG

Education: JOHN MADISON HIGH SCHOOL. Credit Courses at JOHN FAY COLLEGE JUNIOR MECHANICAL ENGINEERING Course U.S. Merchant MARINES Leadership Mentorship Program LANDMARK EDUCATION

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): MANAGER - MGMT CONSULTING; SCREEN ACTOR Guilds Actor; 20 yrs Experience in Entrepreneurship

Pursuits in the area of Real Estate, Limousine, mortgage banking

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Work on Hon. Mayor David No Dinkins Mayoral Campaign and District Leader Hon. Carmen Quinones (former member of NYS assembly) CAMPAIGN AS MANAGER OF STREET TEAM. BROOKLYN COUNTY Committee member.

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES NO Leader of
Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES NO Brooklyn Telephone CLUB
(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: [Signature] Date: 7/22/09

## 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.

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### VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

1. What is your position with respect to allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries?  
*NOT only do we Support but it's already in our own Party Rule!*

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?  
*Part of our Party Platform*

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?  
*attract more people to reduce*

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

*appointment by the mayor and city council are still Political appointees*

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### 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? *I would Oppose Public Funding because if then the legislature should Public interest then they can raise the money.* Support Oppose

CITY COUNCIL REFORM *and gather the volunteers to put the initiative on the ballot to get it passed*

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 *UNDecided*

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

*I support three terms for the City Council member as this allows him/her sufficient time to complete his/her vision for his/her district*

**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?

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?

20 AN Audit of the Pension fund and  
Look for cost savings by reducing redundant  
Jobs and areas of waste that would reduce  
costs to the Taxpayers and the City.

- 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?

I Oppose the City Council Resolution because <sup>it's</sup> a  
Waste of time and effort that the State Assembly & Senate  
would not Listen to. However, I do Support a State  
Constitutional Convention and will work diligently to  
Get the State Legislature State Governor to Pass a State

- 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.

- ① Prime example is the Mayor should be able to  
Say what should be going on in our City School  
not the State
- ② more control over our Tax Structure without  
involvement

- 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?

Do an audit of the entire MTA Structure  
from top to bottom and purge costs including  
redundant jobs and give buy outs of early  
retirement packages to MTA Employees. There is too  
much people on the payroll that are not needed and  
the cost should not be on tax payers back.

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

① Before each Agency <sup>Head</sup> submits their budget to the Mayor must submit to the City and justify to the Council their budget first

② City Council in conjunction with the Controller Office should have more oversight of City Agencies budget for review projects for the public worth costs and any overruns. For example one year spending \$50,000,000 to benefit 75 people

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? With the current economic crisis it make good fiscal sense and proper stewardship not to do so at this time. The previous was good economic sense.

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.

Because we generate more income in NY City than any other City the value of services received would never equate taxes paid. However, the portion that does come to New York City must be spent in New York more efficiently with greater results. There is a stigma of wasteful mismanagement that is attributed to all government agencies.

Taxes should be lowered on small businesses as the economic times have cause many that provide jobs to this City to go out of business. The Real Estate taxes should be lowered that are passed on from the Landlord to commercial tenants and incentives given for small businesses to hire workers. Also the UBT that cripple small businesses should be ~~lowered~~ eliminated to avoid double taxation of small businesses who are unincorporated.

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? *Absolutely Need to do that.*

- o We need to attract different types of businesses including our Lost Industrial base. Jobs*
- o Need to attract new and innovative industries such as Biotech and other Research-based industries. We should be able to attract these industries by emphasizing our great Universities and Colleges throughout the City of New York. Because the Shift is now into high tech and research the income*

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?

*Would go up and so therefore*

- The council needs to have more Home Rule regarding Education so that good ideas such as Charter Schools can be implemented without State Intervention. Parents and teachers should be involved in Yearly or Bi Annual Conference together so ideas can be exchange to make the educational system*

*Spending would be adjusted accordingly. Lastly, the city budget should be reviewed for redundancies and wasteful mismanagement.*

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?

- 1) Make it a Civil Service Job and not all Political appointees.*
- 2) NYC BOE must be forced by Council to Computerize NYC Campaign Finance Files*

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?

*that receive funds /*

- 1) a Database of all Non-Profits from NYC, New York State and Federal must be Posted on a Website.*
- 2) all relatives employed by a Non-Profit must be fully disclosed including Salaries and Job Titles*

Additional Comments:

~~This season represents a great opportunity  
in the midst of an economic crisis to  
be the~~

There are not enough voice  
for the ordinary person, small business  
our young people and our elderly  
and the poor; That's why I'm the  
"regular Guy running" to be the greatest  
public servant in the history of my  
District # 37.





## 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. Foster Care Reform
2. Eradicating Poverty and Hunger
3. Job Creation and Neighborhood Entrepreneurship
4. Youth Development
5. Caring for our Elderly