



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: Derek I. Sacerdote Age: 34

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 46

Campaign Address: 1022 E 82nd St Bklyn, NY 11236

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 531-6059 Fax: ( ) N/A

Party Affiliation(s): Libertarian Campaign Manager Name: -Self-

Website & Email: dereksacerdote4citycouncil.blogspot.com / derek\_sacerdote@yahoo.com

Education: B.S. Biology, Brooklyn College 1997, MA Special Education, Tuorn 2008

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Public H.S. Teacher, 11 years

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: None held

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: [Signature] Date: 7/12/09

## 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?   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Support | <input 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 | <input type="radio"/> 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 type="radio"/> Support            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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 | <input type="radio"/> 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?  | <input type="radio"/> Support            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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? | <input type="radio"/> Support | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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

While on the surface the voters are free to remove an incumbent at any time, the financial, organizational, and recognition advantage of a sitting candidate may be insurmountable for any but the most resourced challenger. Limited tenure reduces pandering and levels the playing field.

**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?

I would advocate for significantly less generous packages for new hires, as well as appeal to conscientious pensioners to refuse benefits especially if they are well-off financially.

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?

- ① NY's Dept of Education is antiquated
- ② We need to strengthen judicial review
- ③ Legislator salary and 'perks' are excessive

- 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?

- ① The freedom to relax enforcement of drug laws on an experimental basis
- ② The freedom to create enterprise zones enabling greater opportunity for non-traditional small business and significantly reduced taxation.

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?

- ① De-regulated "gypps," cabs, "dollar" vans and other private competition to the MTA
- ② Drop expensive cosmetic alterations in favor of faster service in order to increase ridership.
- ③ Follow-Thru on disabling Metrocards of truant students.

- ③ The freedom to develop an urban based vocational high-school curriculum which could be substituted for regents credits.

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

Major projects should be presented to the public by their representatives in town hall meetings. Costs and benefits must clearly be communicated, and online referendums should be employed regularly to gauge public sentiment regarding budgetary decisions.

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?

This made a lot of sense. Future pension obligations are what brought down the major automakers. We need to either push back retirement age or significantly reduce what is offered to new city hires, or both.

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.

Considering our tremendous tax base, I believe New York City and State are doing quite poorly in comparison with neighboring states and municipalities, most of which have lower sales tax, lower road tolls, and lower fines of all kinds.

= Taxes should be cut =

- ① Immediately halt all unnecessary school modernizations. Permit school staff to submit proposals for each year's budget at the beginning of each school year.
- ② Limit transit upgrades to functionality rather than cosmetics.
- ③ Reduce staff allowance and office allowance of all city elected officials.
- ④ Cut trash collection from 2-days to 1-day in low need neighborhoods and permit private curbside recycling.
- ⑤ Permit homeowners to privately contract road repair in exchange for tax rebates.

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 must de-regulate nontraditional work: sidewalk vendors, private car/van services, handymen, scrap metal collectors, street advertising, pedicabs. Given a favorable climate, motivated people find work. As suggested earlier, the competition would allow reduced service for transit and sanitation.

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?

Online access will best accommodate the working parents unable to attend open school nights. More open houses as well as advertisement of them on TV and radio would improve attendance. The system also needs off-site evaluation especially for tests, since results today are typically distorted intentionally. Again, we must bring back vocational ed to address the needs of students entering the workforce.

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 More public service announcements explaining dates, deadlines, and processes like petitioning
- ② Publicly-arranged debates between candidates, either in person or an online format

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?

- ① Prohibit hiring of immediate family (parents/spouse/child/sibling)
- ② Hold referendums on each such nonprofit funding at least annually, and encourage the organization to advertise its own merits prior to the referendum.

## Additional Comments:

I am running for City Council because of a lifetime of frustration. I have worked as a teacher for 11 years, in which time I have seen students not being served appropriately, then given inflated grades in order to make the school and city appear successful. Large numbers of students do not go to college, and we need to address their needs better.

Personal freedom has taken a major hit in the last few administrations, from crackdowns on smoking to trans-fat and a growing intrusion of City Hall into what are rightly personal decisions. The enforcement of drug laws, especially those concerning marijuana, are responsible for more deaths, civilian and police, than the drug itself.

Taxes rise and services fall. Because the city has no competition, there is no accountability. While residents are mercilessly persecuted for improper sorting of trash or for parking violations, failure to maintain roads or operate efficient reliable mass transit goes unpenalized.

Small business is the core of our economy. Relentless persecution of people like sidewalk vendors or "gypsy" cab drivers creates more homeless/unemployed/crime, deprives residents of goods and services, and allows large business and city outfits to operate competition-free.



## 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. Advocate for objective off-site evaluation of schools/students. Reinstate vocational ed.
2. Strengthen CCRB or develop another organization to independently investigate police misconduct.
3. Fight to relax restrictions which impede small business, traditional or nontraditional.
4. Fight against inappropriate intrusion of City Hall into personal freedom.
5. Develop a system of accountability for infrastructural responsibilities such as road repairs, trash pick-up, and transit service, with mandatory benchmarks that if not met, must result in tax rebate or freeze on MTA fare.

