



2010 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR  
CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing the State of New York and our interest in reforming how state government operates. 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. If you seek our support, we would also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public in our Voters Directory and other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

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Candidate Name: Nelson L. Castro Age: 38

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Assembly/Senate District #: 86<sup>th</sup> AD

Campaign Address: 10 East 183<sup>rd</sup> Street, Bronx, NY 10453

Campaign Telephone Number: ( 347 ) 994.8113 Fax: ( )

Party Affiliation(s): DEM Campaign Manager Name: Domingo Flores

Website & Email: www.castro2010.com & nelsoncastro2010@gmail.com

Education: BA, Andrews University (Michigan)

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): 19 Months

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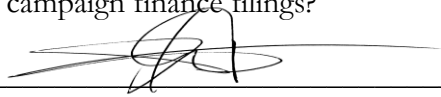
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

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Are you willing to be interviewed by CU’s Local Candidates Committee? YES  NO   
(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its “Preferred Candidate” and “Endorsed Candidate” rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES  NO

Signature of Candidate:  Date: July 7, 2010

## I. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Please state your position on the following reform measures. Specify whether you support or oppose each. You may elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.

### ELECTION REFORM

1. What is your position on establishing by statute an Independent Legislative Redistricting Commission charged with drawing congressional and state legislative lines and removing the responsibility from the Legislature, through the passage of S.1614B/A.5279B ?	Support
2. What is your position on a process where the legislature directly appoints the members of a districting commission, as in S.7881-A or S.7882-A, as an alternative to the independent commission referred to in Question 1?	Support
3. What is your position on maintaining the current redistricting process in which legislative lines are drawn by the legislators with support and research from the New York State Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR)?	Support
4. What is your position on the adoption of stricter redistricting rules that would ensure that every district is: more equal in population (within 1% deviation from the mean), contiguous and compact, formed without regard for protecting an incumbent or political party, mindful of the need to keep neighborhoods intact, and not drawn to undermine racial, linguistic, and ethnic representation?	Support
5. What is your position on restructuring the state Board of Elections and changing the administration of elections by amending the constitution to abolish the two-party system of governance and operation?	Support
6. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by, for example, lowering signature requirements and utilizing less burdensome witness signature requirements?	Support
7. What is your position on amending the Municipal Home Rule law to limit the ability of a mayor-appointed charter revision commission to “bump” other local charter amendments from appearing on the ballot?	Support
8. What is your position on removing prisoner populations from the census counts for the purpose of redistricting and instead counting those populations in their last known place of residence?	Support
9. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Registration?	Support
10. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Support

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

11. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support
12. What is your position on establishing a system of public financing for state legislative and statewide races?	Support
13. If you support public financing, what is your position on a system where public funds are awarded on a matching basis (similar in design and function to the New York City system) rather than a system of full public funding of campaigns?	Support

14. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state?	Support
15. What is your position on banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs, while still allowing such entities to form separate PACs?	Support
16. What is your position on limiting transfers from party committees to candidates, or other committees, to twice the limit set on individual contributors and limiting contributions to party committees to the same ceiling placed on candidates?	Support
17. What is your position on increasing disclosure and reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures by requiring candidates to include full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution?	Support
18. What is your position on requiring that two periodic campaign finance reports be filed during the legislative session to reflect contributions given during the session?	Support
19. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support
20. What is your position on requiring disclosure of independent expenditure campaigns?	Support

### **ETHICS REFORM**

21. What is your position on changing the representation of the Commission on Public Integrity so no one elected official makes a majority of the appointments?	Support
22. What is your position on expanding the jurisdiction of the newly formed Commission on Public Integrity to include legislative ethics violations, lobbying and campaign finance enforcement?	Support

### **BUDGET REFORM**

23. What is your position on requiring all budget documents, including budget bills and legislative additions, to be presented in a format that is organized into programmatic categories and facilitates public and legislative review?	Support
24. What is your position on requiring the governor's budget submission to present the full scope of the state's financial obligations, including its public authorities?	Support
25. What is your position on establishing an independent, nonpartisan budget office to provide revenue projections, display economic and policy analysis and require that the state engage in long term, multi-year budget planning?	Support
26. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Support
27. What is your position on requiring regular reporting of lump-sum appropriations and member items that includes detailed information on funds distributed, recipients, and remaining funds and bans on member item appropriations to organizations of which a close relative of the Member is on the staff or board.?	Support
28. What is your position on distributing member item allocations equally amongst all legislators and requiring for greater accountability as expressed in S. 7007/A10116?	Support
29. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	Support
30. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Support
31. What is your position on mandating the use of conference committees in the legislative budget process?	Support

## ADDITIONAL REFORM

32. Do you support a system of selecting New York trial court judges through an appointment process in which candidates are recommended by citizens committees on the basis of merit?	Support
33. Do you support further reform of the Wicks Law, which requires New York State government entities to award separate prime contracts for the major components of a construction project?	Support

Please use the space provided or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the above issues. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

### Election Reform

I stand fully in support of efforts to make our election process more accountable, transparent and secure. To ensure that we remove barriers to citizens who wish to cast their ballot, thus ensuring that every vote counts; I support policies such as “No Excuse Absentee Voting”, allowing same-day registration and weekend voting along with other necessary election reform policies. I plan to work with the Legislature to take steps to implement voter-friendly election reforms to ensure that all citizens are provided an opportunity to cast their vote.

### Campaign Finance Reform

Over the past decade the cost of running for office has dramatically increased. Money has unfortunately become a major factor in elections; thus leading candidates to rely heavily on donors and special interest groups seeking influence to help get them elected.

When I was elected in 2008, I pledged to always put the people of my community before politics or special interest. **For these reasons, I fully support the enactment of a public funds matching program in State elections.** I believe that if we reduce contributions limits, tighten enforcement and require greater disclosure and reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures as well as independent expenditures, we will ensure that we reduce the influence of money in the election process.

### Ethics Reform

It is no secret that ethics reform is needed now more than ever. We need to restore the people’s trust in their government. I was truly proud to support the recent ethics reform legislation that was passed by the state legislature. Although we have made much progress, there is still much more to do. It is imperative that we create a stronger ethics enforcement commission, which would have jurisdiction over lobbying violations, legislative ethics violations, and campaign finance enforcement. This change would allow the commission to fully monitor all intersections of money in politics.

### Budget Reform

This year was the perfect example of why we need budget reform in the state. We need to pass reform that restores integrity, increases transparency, and fosters efficiency in the budget process. The process should allow for substantive public debate on budget decisions, especially during these fiscally challenging times. As I seek re-election I am committed to working with my colleagues in government to ensure that we work towards meaningful budget reform.

## **CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS (PAST and CURRENT)**

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 or goals you made to your constituents when you ran for your current seat and what progress has been made in keeping those promises, and
- b. what are the top five promises or goals you are making to the voters during this campaign?

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 OR GOALS FROM 2008 AND ACTION ON THEM**

1. **Preservation of Affordable Housing** - In 2009 and 2010 I voted in support of legislation that have resulted in the protection and preservation of affordable housing.
2. **Education** – Since 2008, I have allocated dollars to my districts public schools to ensure that school programs were properly funded. This year my colleagues and I passed landmark education reforms, that resulted in the allocation of over \$700 million for afterschool programs.
3. **Expanding Senior Services** – Since 2008, allocated dollars to expand the options available to seniors at senior centers.

### **TOP FIVE 2010 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS**

An overview of Nelson Castro's platform on Jobs, Affordable Housing, Public Safety, Education & Youth Programs, and Senior Citizen Services for the people in the 86<sup>th</sup> Assembly District and throughout New York State.

#### Economy + Jobs

Nelson Castro understands that families in our community are in dire need of jobs that pay good wages and that, small businesses need our assistance. In an effort to confront our economic reality and address the 19% unemployment rate in the 86<sup>th</sup> AD, Castro is taking a pro-growth, pro-jobs approach to the economy. Castro's funding allocations and legislative decisions are helping workers and small businesses by connecting constituents to job training programs to help them gain the skills necessary to compete in the job market. Furthermore, Castro fully supports economic policies that help to boost our economy and will pursue legislative & programmatic proposals that establish:

- New Job Creation Tax Credits
- Expansion of Small Business Tax Credit
- The expansion of Job Development & Training programs for community residents

#### Quality Affordable Housing

Nelson Castro believes that our community's greatness comes from the ability for people who grew up here to continue living here, newcomers to afford getting started here; working families to live here; seniors to

retire here and the ability for all of us to live together in unity. To accomplish this, Nelson Castro has pledged to continue supporting & pursuing legislation that keeps our housing stock affordable. Castro believes that Housing Policy in New York State should:

- Preserve Government-Assisted Affordable Housing Programs
- Create incentives to develop affordable housing for new populations
- Encourage Affordable Housing development in the private sector through tax incentives and below market prices for City-owned land.

#### Public Safety

Nelson Castro is fighting to keep our community safe for our children and our families. Our community has unfortunately been plagued with high levels of drugs, gang violence, burglaries, and other heinous crimes. This highlights the crisis that our community is facing and further emphasizes the need for us to address the issue of crime in our neighborhoods. To improve our community's public safety, Nelson Castro has supported

- Statewide initiatives to combat gang & domestic violence
- State funding to expand youth recreational programs in our community
- Legislation that led to the reform of the Rockefeller Drug Laws

**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee**  
**299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007**  
via fax to 212.227.0345 or via email to [asenteno@citizensunion.org](mailto:asenteno@citizensunion.org)