



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 Antonio Denis

Age: 55

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Assembly District # 72

Campaign Address: Denis for State Assembly; 9-21 Sherman Ave; NYC NY 10040

Campaign Telephone Number: ( 212 ) 569-1990

Party Affiliation: Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Francisco Spies

Website: denisforstateassembly.com Email: nelsondenis248@aol.com

Education: Harvard University (BA, Government) ; Yale Law School (J.D.)

Occupation/Employer: Attorney

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Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN (68<sup>TH</sup> A.D. , 1996-2000)

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Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES

*(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

Signature of Candidate: Nelson Antonio Denis 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?	Oppose
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)?	Oppose
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?	Not clear about this question
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?	Too many opportunities for fraud (Oppose)
10. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Not sure (fraud opportunities)

### 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?	Oppose
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?	Not sure
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.

While in the State Assembly, I voted for Michael Bragman for Speaker of the Assembly in 2000. This was a major contributing factor to the loss of my Assembly seat to Adam Clayton Powell IV, that same year. So I don't just talk about "reform," I DID something about it and paid the consequences. As you can see from my opinion editorials (Daily News, Newsday, New York Sun) I support all of the following:

1. Establish a Morehouse Commission with subpoena powers, to pursue corruption in all levels of state government and state administrative agencies (including IDA's and public authorities).
2. Convene a Constitutional Convention. The last one was in 1967. It is long overdue and will enable the codification of structural reforms into our state constitution.
3. Eliminate the Governor's "Message of Necessity." Twenty-five percent (25%) of NYS legislation (particularly special interest spending measures) are passed under the cover of a "Message of Necessity," which circumvents the usual 72-hour reading period.
4. Monitor all IDA and Public Authority spending. This constitutes a hidden source of borrowing in our state budget, with very little accountability.
5. Establish legislative term limits.

**CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS**

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing your top five campaign promises or goals you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position.

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises or goals 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 2010 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. Use the Community Re-investment Act (CRA) to increase bank lending for small business and affordable housing development. I did this as an Assemblyman in East Harlem, and the local banks DOUBLED their lending.
2. Complete transparency and accountability in funding and member items for my district.
3. Encourage the development of Charter Schools in my district.
4. Work with the local Chamber of Commerce and local merchants to promote the stability and growth of small business (and consequent jobs) in my district.
5. Work closely with local senior centers - to protect the health, well-being, and economic survival of our seniors.

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Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee  
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via fax to 212.227.0345 or via email to [asenteno@citizensunion.org](mailto:asenteno@citizensunion.org)