



**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
ELECTION 2007**

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questions related to Council and election reform policy issues facing the City of New York. We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire on our website and in other appropriate venues.

Citizens Union will also be using your answers to guide the process of evaluating candidates for this office and to assist us in determining whether to issue a candidate "endorsement."

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: **Jennifer James**

District/Borough: **40th Council district/ Kings County**

Campaign Address: **1169 Nostrand Avenue , Brooklyn, NY 11225**

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 221-2007 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat**

Campaign Manager: **Glynda Carr**

Website & E.mail: www.friendsofjennifer.com & info@friendsofjennifer.com

Education: **Graduate of Syracuse University**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): **Professional Fundraiser**

Previous Offices and Campaigns: **N/A**

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES NO

(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: February 5, 2007

VOTING ELECTIONS AND REFORMS

1. Do you support allowing independents to vote in party primaries? YES NO
X

Comments: Although, voting in local elections is declining and the number of non-enrolled voters is growing rapidly, particularly among youth and recent immigrants, I can not find any significant long-term studies showing how non-partisan elections affected voters and elections. I firmly believe that party designations helped voters to understand who they are voting for and help to increase voter turnout.

2. Do you support allowing non citizen immigrants the right to vote in municipal elections? YES NO
X

Comments: I believe that the better avenue for expanding the right to vote for immigrants should be to make available the appropriate mechanisms and incentives for non-citizens to obtain citizenship. There is the possibility that it could reduce the incentive to naturalize.

3. Do you support the passage of state legislation that would allow for other charter measures to appear on the ballot at the same time when there is a charter reform proposal initiated by a charter commission appointed by the Mayor? YES NO
X

Comments: I think that multiple measures become quite confusing to voters and I would support limits on the number of charter measures listed on the ballot at the same time.

4. Do you support increasing the pay of election day poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event? YES NO
X

Comments: _____

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

5. Do you support stricter requirements on the dispersal of campaign finance matching funds to candidates that face non-competitive challengers? YES NO
X

Comments: _____

6. Do you support limiting the influence of those doing business with the city by restricting campaign contributions from these entities? YES NO
X

Comments: _____

7. Do you support a ban on the transfer of funds that were raised in a previous election cycle into a current account? YES NO
X

Comments: The transferring of funds to various other campaign committees is an issue that I must carefully examine when I become the Councilmember for the 40th Council district. Currently there are no rules that prevent the transferring of funds to various city accounts, but I have serious concerns about whether money should be refunded, if not transferred and how a Committee would be allowed to disperse those funds. The argument that this gives a competitive advantage to some who have money in their accounts is compelling.

8. Do you support allowing public campaign financing for charter proposals? YES NO
X

Comments:

9. Do you support lowering the campaign contribution limit for City Council candidates from the current \$2750 for those that voluntarily participate in the city's campaign finance program? YES NO
X

Comments: I would support lowering the campaign contribution limit for City Council candidates from the current level if there was an increase in the match rate for those contributions.

10. Do you support lowering the expenditure limit for City Council candidates that voluntarily participate in the city's campaign finance program? YES NO
X

Comments: I do not support lowering the expenditure limit for City Council candidates that voluntarily participate in the city's campaign finance program. I believe that the current amount is sufficient, especially given the population in the given district and expense costs being incurred in that area (ie: rent).

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| 11. Do you support allowing Council committees to function more independently of the Speaker than is presently the case? | YES | NO |
| | X | |
| • Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? | YES | NO |
| | X | |
| • Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? | YES | NO |
| | X | |
| • Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? | YES | NO |
| | X | |

Comments: I think the process for the public to track legislation as it moves through City Council should be more transparent. I would work with Speaker Quinn on the streamlining of the bill drafting process. I would advocate for committees to have a greater role in the budget process, so that their particular area of expertise should be allowed to be heard.

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| 12. Do you support eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? | YES | NO |
| | | X |

Comments: The 25% raise Council members issued themselves recently, while not addressing stipends — or "lulus" — for committee chairs, or the ability of Council members to collect outside income is troubling. I would support a careful examination and review of how many members have outside incomes, making the job full time and examining the public sector vs. private sector income inequity. I am against allowing Council members to vote for raises in salary mid-term. We should instead pattern this process after the one followed by Congress and our state representatives who are only allowed to vote for raises for those elected in the next term to prevent conflicts.

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| 13. Do you support consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees? | YES | NO |
| | X | |

Comments: Yes I support a consolidation of the current City Council committee structure. I believe some committees are duplicitous.

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| 14. Do you support keeping Council term limits in place for two consecutive four year terms? If not, why, and what do you propose? | YES | NO |
| | X | |

Comments:

15. Do you support keeping in place the current property tax rate? If not, what do you propose? YES NO
X

Comments: This is a very complex issue but I would support a full review of the tax code for all buildings in New York City and would stress refunds for homeowners.

16. Do you support establishing mandatory inclusionary zoning standards and requirements for all new residential development projects? If so, what should be the minimum percentage set-aside for low-income households? YES NO
X

Comments: I do support mandatory inclusionary zoning standards and I do not believe that a one size fits all method works. I would work with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and other interested parties to determine the appropriate numbers in various neighborhoods.

17. Do you support the use of eminent domain to seize private property to allow for development of projects like the basketball arena in downtown Brooklyn? YES NO
X

Comments: Cities across the country have been using eminent domain to force people off their land, so private developers can build more expensive homes and offices that will eventually pay more in property taxes than the buildings they are replacing. Until the 1950s, courts held the narrow view that public use meant literally " use by the public" and I agree with the 1950's interpretation. I do not believe that the government should operate as a real estate agent for private companies.

18. Do you support increasing the limit on the number of charter schools permissible by law? No

Comments: I am against the expansion of charter schools because we still do not have statistics on them. Also, I believe that they drain much needed resources from our public school system. I am still questioning their performance and how they should be controlled and regulated.

Additional Comments: _____

