

*Attn: Michelle Bright
fax 212-227-0345
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Citizens Union 2012 State Legislative Candidate Questionnaire
1/13



**2012 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE**

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State and our interest in reforming state government. 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 September 13th Primary Election, and our "Endorsed Candidates" for the November 6th General Election.

If you seek our support, we would also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. We will not automatically schedule an interview with you if you return this questionnaire, as we prioritize competitive races and resources constrain us from evaluating all races. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, Voters Directory and other appropriate venues. We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: John A. Messer Age: 42

Campaign Address: 147-15 45th Avenue, Flushing, New York 11355
(See www.messersforenate.com for additional campaign offices)

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 225-0089 Fax: (718) 460-0351

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: Diana Her

Website & Email: www.messersforenate.com & jmesser@messersforenate.com

Education: B.A., M.A. in Government and J.D.

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

Managing Member, Manoussos & Messer, PLLC
President, Manhole Barrier Security Systems, Inc.
Vice President, DC Solar Solutions, Inc.

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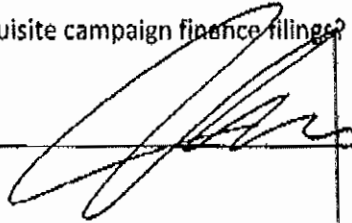
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Candidate for New York State Senate, District 16 (2010)
Queensboro Hill Civic Association, Board Member
Queens Chamber of Commerce, Member
Democratic Club of Flushing, Member
Center for the Women of New York, Member
Urban Fellowship, Office of the Mayor of the City of New York, assigned to Corporate Retention
Department of the Public Development Corporation now the Economic Development Corporation
Supporter of various community and civic associations. Advocate for the small business community.

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.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES NO

Signature of Candidate: _____



Date: 7/14/12

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1. 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 second passage of the constitutional amendment (S.6698/A.9526 of 2012) creating an Independent redistricting commission with appointees split evenly between the majority and minority parties?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
2. 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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
3. 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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
4. 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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Registration?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
9. What is your position on redesigning the ballot to ensure that voters are able to clearly read candidates' names, titles of offices, designations and ballot questions; that instructions are clear and accurate; that bilingual ballots are required; and that the ballot is able to split races between multiple pages?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
10. What is your position on reforming the special election process, creating a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by A.1369/S.26?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
11. What is your position regarding automatic voter registration in which voter registration information of individuals who consent to be registered is provided electronically to the Board of Elections, and address information is automatically updated?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

12. What is your position on establishing a matching public financing system for state legislative and statewide races similar to the New York City model?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
13. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
14. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
15. What is your position on limiting or banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would be able to form separate political action committees due to constitutional issues regarding freedom of speech.)	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
16. What is your position on closing "soft money" loopholes such as limiting transfers from party committees to candidates or other committees to twice the limit set on individual contributors and limiting contributions to party committees, including housekeeping accounts, to the same ceiling placed on candidates?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

17. What is your position on requiring candidates to include full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
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CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM (CONTINUED)

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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
19. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
20. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities and linking expenditures to candidates targeted?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
21. What is your position on limiting the ability of candidates to accumulate "war chests" and then transferring funds raised in one race to another?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
22. What is your position on creating an enforcement entity independent of the State Board of Elections to oversee campaign finance laws?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

JUDICIAL REFORM

23. What is your position on a merit-based appointment system through creation of a commission for the selection of judges in all of New York's trial courts?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
24. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state's court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

ETHICS REFORM

25. What is your position on empowering the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases involving public corruption, including serious election law malfeasance?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
26. What is your position on amending the State Constitution to extend pension forfeiture, subject to due process safeguards, to all public officers and legislators who have been convicted of felonies, building on the 2011 ethics reforms which only apply to future state employees?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

BUDGET REFORM

27. 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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
28. 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?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
29. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
30. What is your position on distributing member item allocations equally among all legislators and requiring for greater accountability as expressed in S.1681A/A.00855?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
31. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
32. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
33. What is your position on limiting the ability of the governor to enact policy changes governing the use of resources in appropriation bills by requiring that such bills be consistent with existing law or proposed changes in separate legislation?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

ADDITIONAL REFORM

34. What is your position on increasing public access to information by reforming the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws to enhance transparency, as well as the creation of tools such as open data portals to ease public access to information?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>
35. What is your position on enactment of legislative rules reform to strengthen rank-and-file members' roles in the legislative process and create more equity between members?	<u>Support/Oppose</u>

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

The Brennan Commission has said that we have the most dysfunctional legislature in the nation. This really isn't a secret to anyone. People all around this Senate District have shared their concerns with me and many are struggling, frustrated with the fiscal crisis in our State, and more specifically with the inability of our State Senate to come together for the good of all New Yorkers.

New York, once a national model has seen nearly 2.5 million middle-income tax paying residents move out of our state in the last decade. We have lost vital jobs and services from the closing of our schools, hospitals, senior centers and other support services. It's no wonder that many voters have voted with their feet and 8 out of 10 of those remaining feel that New York is headed in the wrong direction.

Our state was once a national model and I believe that it can be again through inspired civic involvement and new leadership. Partisan politics and special interests must give way to progress that restores confidence in our State government and is in the best interests of all New Yorkers. There is much more we can do and must do other than cutting services or raising taxes and we can start with an agenda for moving our State forward. It's time for a change because more of the same isn't working.

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 2012 CAMPAIGN PROMISES AND GOALS

Moving New York Forward

1. Protecting the Most Vulnerable

We need an agenda to move our State forward and to help the most vulnerable in a fiscally responsible way.

New Yorkers are feeling the impact of the economic downturn, especially those most vulnerable. I will fight to strengthen and protect key programs for our seniors and the economically disadvantaged like meals-on-wheels, caregiver support, supplemental pharmaceutical and home energy assistance programs, transportation, job training and other wellness opportunities.

Our poor and near poor are struggling especially with the cuts to day care support, after school and various other programs due the lack of funding. Today, 1 in 6 New York residents receive food stamps. This is up from 1 in 10 just a few years ago. Even our seniors on fixed incomes are struggling. As the cost of living increases, our seniors are not protected. There is no federal cost of living adjustment for those who rely on social security and those fortunate enough to have investments have seen them decrease in value over the last several years. I support a cost of living adjustment to the state share of social security as a way help our seniors. With many unemployed or underemployed, it understandable why so many rely on services funded through state for assistance.

Economic security is having the income and resources necessary to meet all of your basic needs including housing, food, transportation, healthcare and miscellaneous essentials. Currently 100% of the poverty level is utilized as an indicator of economic security which is \$11,170 for a single person and \$15,130 for a two person family. This is unsatisfactory. We should consider utilizing 200% of the federal poverty level as a closer approximation of economic security to shape our planning efforts.

It is imperative that we support services that keep our seniors healthy and independent. Programs that keep older adults in their homes save tax dollars and give seniors a better quality of life ~ giving our seniors the dignity and respect they deserve after a lifetime of providing to our community. Senior centers provide support, recreational services and a social environment – cutting these services should not be an option.

The future of our State depends on the ability of our people to work and remain here. In central Queens a new affordable housing project for seniors had 200 home units available. Over 2,000 qualified applications were received – over 1,800 were rejected. It is critical that we provide affordable housing options for our seniors. It is also important that we create opportunities which allow low and moderate-income families to make an investment in our community. Those that make an investment and raise their families in the community are those that will give back and build the community. I support public-private initiatives that encourage affordable housing and long term investments. This will go a long way towards ensuring the stability of our community for another generation.

The primary obligation of an elected representative is to protect those in our community that are most vulnerable – our poor, our near poor, our disabled, our children and our seniors. I take this responsibility seriously and will fight for those most vulnerable.

2. Restructuring our State's Operations

We need to transform the way our government works and get our fiscal house in order. Our State government has become too inefficient and ineffective. There are more than 1,000 State agencies, authorities and commissions rampant with redundancies, numerous duplicative and overlapping functions.

Over the past 10 years, State government spending has outpaced inflation by \$21 Billion and yet,

- We have the worst highway and bridge conditions in the country, but it can't be blamed for a lack of funding. New York spends three times the national average, \$402,000 per mile, on highways and bridges.
- Taxes imposed on our electrical industry, which get passed onto us, surpass any other State which makes it uncompetitive for manufacturers to do business in New York. Manufacturing only accounts for 5.4% of GDP in New York compared with a U.S. average of 11.3%.
- We are consistently one of poorest performers ranking at the bottom in reading, writing and arithmetic. We average around 46th out of 50 in SAT scores and our graduation rates are appalling. Once again, this can't be blamed for lack of funding as New York now spends \$18,618 per student on education. Since the incumbent took office in 1999, per student spending has gone up by nearly 200% with New York now spending the most per student on K-12 public education in the United States – in fact 67% more than the national average.
- We now have the lowest hospital bed to population ratio of any of the Boroughs in Queens. We used to have 17 hospitals in 1999 and we now have 10. The average emergency room bed wait is 17 hours. There is a lot of fraud, waste and abuse.
- New York ranks 50th out of 50 in the category of avoidable hospital use and costs. New York spends more than twice the national average on Medicaid - \$2,316 in New York compared with national average of \$1,015. Medicaid now covers nearly 1 in 3 New Yorker's at a cost of \$53 Billion a year. The numbers are up 73% from 2000 to 2010, rising 13% in the last few years along.

These are just a few of the statistics. New York spends much more than any other state on many essential services. However, more and more of those same services aren't reaching the people that they are intended to reach – the most vulnerable.

Pushing today's problems down the road isn't a solution. More of the same isn't working either. It is imperative that we find ways to consolidate and save taxpayer monies without sacrificing and cutting essential services and programs. It is estimated that more than \$1 Billion in savings can be achieved through increased government efficiencies without sacrificing programs. Local healthcare costs are one of the fastest growing government expenses and it is estimated that hundreds of millions can be saved just through better administration of these programs alone.

I may not be able to change the system, but I do believe that I can be a voice of reason in Albany.

3. Creating Quality Good Paying Jobs

Too many New Yorkers are unemployed or underemployed and our State still continues to lose hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs every year – to the tune of nearly 2.5 Million middle-income tax paying residents and their families over the last decade at a cost of \$4.3B annually. Our State leads the nation in net out-migration of 20 to 35 year olds leaving for other states – those that are investing in the community and raising families; the ones we want to keep.

We need better coordination between agencies so that we can get our fair share of federal dollars that are available to us. In the last several years, New York has lost hundreds of millions in education monies because of our dysfunctional legislature and its inability to work together in the best interests of our State and our children. And, two years ago the federal government awarded \$8 Billion in capital stimulus grants of which New York applied for \$561 Million but only received \$151 Million of the \$561 Million because we weren't ready in time. That could've funded a lot of after school programs, for all ages, and a lot of programs to our poor, near poor and most vulnerable – for a pretty long time.

Now, in this year, as a result of the most recent census and population losses New York will lose two Congressional seats taking with it Billions more of population based federal funding. New York has the 2nd highest taxes in the nation and is the worst State in the country to do business.

We need an aggressive jobs and economic development strategy to get our state working again. We must support our small businesses and incentivize employers to start hiring right now, fast-track development projects currently awaiting development and incentivize businesses to move to New York or to expand their existing operations already here. New York must be made more competitive by reducing the high cost of living and of doing business in this state. We must enact an economic development strategy that targets job creation and actually works. We must create long term job growth by creating a more competitive business climate. We must diversify our economy and promote tax policies which reward employers for creating good paying jobs.

Fast tracking responsible development projects currently awaiting development creates jobs now when we need them most. The Flushing Commons and Willets Point projects in Queens will create thousands of construction and permanent good paying jobs. JFK and LaGuardia airports are two of Queens largest employers and yet delays caused by our aging air traffic control system costs the region nearly \$3B every year in lost economic activity as a result of conventions that are re-routed to other cities. I support the efforts to look into building a state of the art convention center at Willet's Point along with an Esplanade which will attract more business into Queens and our State.

It is important that we offer targeted tax and financial incentives to businesses that offer the greatest potential for long term growth in areas where our State is best able to compete in areas like bio-tech, high-tech, clean-tech, green-tech, pharmaceuticals and financial services. I support the creation of a new economic development program where businesses would be eligible for a rebate of up to 80% of the personal income tax withheld on the additional jobs created over a period of 10 years with a commitment to remaining and expanding in New York.

New York spends more than \$65 Billion annually on energy of which \$35 Billion is spent to pay for energy imports. We need to enhance wind, solar and other alternative energy investments which will create jobs right here in New York. I fully support the NY-Sun Initiative which promotes investments in solar projects. While I do not support hydraulic fracking methods, I believe that we should explore safe alternative ways to reach our natural gas resources which aren't harmful to the environment. Pursuing clean natural gas resources has the potential to create 40,000 good paying jobs annually. Another fracking method called LPG fracking, although more expensive, is supported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority should be further examined.

While we are working to create immediate additional sources of revenue and jobs we must not forget those most vulnerable. It is important that we set-aside monies to protect those who may be subject to the social hazards of legalizing gaming, environmental hazards associated with fracking or other potential risks that affect our community and the economically disadvantaged.

We need to make a real commitment to our small businesses. They represent 98% of New York's private employers and yet many are struggling because of this lingering economy. I support State programs which would assist small businesses in obtaining capital necessary to re-energize and expand their operations. We must provide credit worth 'mom & pop' businesses with access to financial credit to modernize, expand and grow their businesses. There must be better coordination between agencies so that small businesses can take advantage of city, state and federal contracts and programs currently available. We must stop penalizing our small businesses and treating them as an additional source of tax revenue through fees and fines, which are up by more than 500% in the last 7 years, because we are putting them out of business. I support a State law which would require small businesses to be given a warning first on minor offenses and an opportunity to cure before being fined. Let's work with our small businesses and help them succeed and grow instead of working against them.

Increasing the minimum wage is vital to our economy and to income equality and I support the increase of the minimum wage in New York. However, I also believe that this increase should be balanced against the fact that we are three years into an unusually weak economic recovery. Therefore, I would support an increase in the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.50 in two increments. It would be phased in at \$7.85 in the first year and then would increase to \$8.50 provided certain economic indicator thresholds were met which showed that our economy is improving. The two phase increase approach supports income equality and yet is sensitive to businesses. It should be noted that New York has lost many of its residents to Florida and Arizona, both of which have a minimum wage of \$7.65-\$7.67.

The Paid Sick Leave Bill is a working family issue which disproportionately affects the lower income wage earner. More than 40 Million American workers get no paid sick leave when it is a normal benefit for workers in 145 other countries. Many people in the community have told me that they

are forced to go to work when ill because they cannot afford to take time off from work. Connecticut passed a paid sick leave law which reportedly had no adverse impact on jobs or the economy. I support a State bill which would mandate a specific number of paid sick leave days to small businesses with greater than 50 employees which is similar to the Connecticut law. The law should be monitored after a year for its impact on employees, on the job injuries and small businesses. Pending a positive outcome, I would support extending the paid sick leave law to small businesses with greater than 20 employees.

4. Improving Education and Promoting Good Health and Public Safety Programs that will Move Our Neighborhoods Forward

Elementary and Secondary Education

New York must be the leader when it comes to education. It is imperative that we find innovative ways to move our schools forward because providing access to quality education is one of the most important investments we can make as a society. We need to hold our schools accountable and increase their performance instead of closing them at a time when we need them most. Our teachers must have the flexibility to teach and the curriculum must be opened up so that our children are able to receive a broader and well-rounded education instead of being 'taught to the test'.

Charter schools are an innovative option for children in areas with underperforming and overcrowded schools. Charter schools also create competition that is essential to keeping our public schools improving. However, it is important that charter schools are held to the same criteria as public schools, including increasing enrollment of low income, ELL and special needs students.

Higher Education

With the economic challenges here in the state, New York Higher Education faces the real possibility of significant budgetary reductions. We must keep in mind that, unlike other areas of State spending, New York spends less on higher education than most states at 46th in per capita spending on higher education. In addition, SUNY and CUNY schools must remain affordable and available to all as they represent 1.25 Million students.

We must also leverage our higher education in New York through industry-university partnerships which would encourage our graduates to stay in New York which is good for our economy. It is important to note that 70,000 foreign students in New York City alone generate \$2 Billion a year to our economy. We must maintain the quality of our schools and their research facilities to ensure that we continue to attract the best and the brightest – along with the contributions that they make to our economy.

Many undocumented immigrants can now apply for an employment permit and can attend college without fear. Under the recent federal Initiative, these immigrants – many of whom have no country which they can call their own – are now eligible to work in this country and pay taxes; and thus should be eligible for tuition assistance. I support The New York Dream Act which would provide tuition assistance for undocumented immigrants. I also support immigration reform which would protect our immigrant communities. It is estimated that immigration reform, which we haven't had in the U.S. since 1986, would add at least \$1.5 Trillion to the U.S. GDP over 10 years – a welcome increase to our tax base which would help to offset the costs of services currently being

utilized by undocumented and uninsured immigrants. Immigration reform would also help to document immigrants within our borders and will bring us one step closer to securing our country and our borders from threats to our national security.

Health

In this country we are second to none in treating medical diseases, but we are 3rd to last of the western industrialized nations in wellness and preventive care. It is imperative that we make an upfront investment in primary care and early preventative education which promotes health and wellness.

Childhood obesity is an epidemic in our community and throughout the State. According to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 32 percent of the children surveyed were overweight based on height and weight measurements, but even worse, a lot of those youngsters were classified as extremely obese. Aggravating the situation in our community and throughout the State, are curtailed gym programs in schools. Often there is no space for them, and gym teachers on the elementary school level are a thing of the past. In addition, many schoolyards have been used to extend buildings, eliminating outdoor recreation areas. My goal is to implement more funding for programs which, among other things, incorporates physical activity into the learning environment.

There is much debate, of recent, on eliminating the size of sugary drinks. This doesn't eliminate the problem of childhood obesity or the onset of adult diabetes. Limiting a sugary drink to 16 oz. only cuts about 74 calories from a meal. The government recently banned the use of trans fats that don't break down in the body. Trans fats were used throughout the fast food industry in deep fryers. We have a similar issue here. It's not the quantity of soda that's at issue -- it is the high fructose corn syrup which is found in sodas and everything else we and our kids eat. We should work with leaders in the food and beverage industry to craft a natural alternative to high fructose corn syrup and then consider legislation which would ban or limit its use.

The demand for healthier food will make a difference -- not government mandates. If we educate the public on healthy choices, and chose not to consume the larger size drinks, the vendors would stop selling them. The solution is to educate and better inform the public about making healthy choices. I would support an educational campaign in the schools through Public Service Announcements, celebrity role models and insurance incentives as a more practical way to tackle this serious growing problem.

Safety

Keeping our communities safe and improving the quality of life is always a priority. We need good public services to keep our neighborhoods strong. Whether you are a homeowner with deep roots in our community or have moved here recently, we all depend on the police, sanitation, and local public services to keep our community strong. My goal is to make sure our neighborhoods get the resources we need and deserve to keep our sidewalks clean, our streets safe and our parks green.

New York has some of the toughest laws in the country, however, we must work together to reduce gun violence on our streets. In response to a series of spikes in gun related crimes we have an opportunity to act in the State legislature to ensure that New York has the strongest gun control laws in the country. Currently, we have no regulations which would prevent bulk purchasing of handguns

or ammunition and we don't require background checks for every gun purchase. I would support legislation which would prevent bulk purchasing, require background checks, and a requirement for micro-stamping which would promote industry wide standards in firearm manufacturing.

Unwarranted stop and frisks are damaging the sense of trust between the residents of this city and local police. Every 36 seconds in New York another pedestrian is stopped and frisked. Frisks are only to be conducted when an officer reasonably suspects the person has a weapon that might endanger officer safety; 55% of those stopped in 2011 were frisked and of those stopped a weapon was found only 1.9% of the time. And, the abuse of stop and frisk has resulted in discriminatory policing practices as black and Latino New Yorkers are stopped and frisked at a far greater rate than whites. I support legislative accountability for bad stops to reduce the number of unwarranted frisks. We need to rebuild police-community relations and work to keep our youth off the streets by funding after the after school programs that we so desperately need. Throughout my District, every parent says the same thing – we need funding for our after school programs.

5. Restoring Trust and Accountability to Our State

It is imperative that we restore trust and accountability to our State Government.

I will work to:

- Make government transparent by putting it on the worldwide web;
- Enact comprehensive ethics reform to restore public trust to our State government;
- Close the loopholes which allow legislators to funnel funds to organizations in which they have an interest;
- Get special interests out of campaign finance so we can have real reform; and
- Sponsor legislation to establish term limits in the State Legislature. NYC has term limits and so should NYS. A political position should be about service to our community and not about securing an elected's lifelong career.

The incumbent that I am running against in this election is an active member of the Democratic Caucus that embarrassed our party and our State after 40 years when it squandered the opportunity for leadership on corruption and special interests in lieu of taking the opportunity to make real and long lasting change in our State.

In that brief moment when Democrats took control of the Senate for the 1st time in 40 years – my opponent became the Chair of the Higher Education Committee where her son, a lobbyist, financially benefitted from his clients who got funding from that Committee. It's classic – and if it's not illegal, it should be.

We must be better than what the incumbent has shown when given the opportunity to lead. We must be better than what my party or the Republicans have shown. We must restore the community's faith in honest government.

The incumbent has all of the union support and she is beholden to them. The Republicans are beholden to big business. I am beholden to neither. I am an independent Democrat that will put the interests of my constituency above all others because I am their lobbyist.

I have worked in government, as a lawyer and in private business. I have served in the armed forces and understand the importance of working together - and if you speak to those who know me well they'll tell you that I know how to get things done.

I am running for State Senate because I believe that I can make a difference. We need action, not rhetoric and the election this year is about getting results - it's about making things happen for New York so that our State government is once again a source of inspiration - for all of us.

It's time for a change because more of the same just isn't working.

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 policy@citizensunion.org
Call us at 212-227-0342 with any questions.