



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: Jason A. Otaño Age: 33

Campaign Address: 265 BRATTAN AVE, BROOKLYN NY 11201

Campaign Telephone Number: (377) 294-4028 Fax: (718) 504-7791

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Jim Downs

Website & Email: Jasonotano.com Vaj@jasonotano.com

Education: Xavier High School, Fordham College P.R.H., Fordham Law School

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): General Counsel to Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz (Just Resigned)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Re-elect Nydia Velázquez EL Frente (Green) Light District, National Congress of Puerto Rican Youth

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

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES [checked] NO

Signature of Candidate: [Signature] Date: 8/1/2012

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 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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote?	Support/Oppose
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Registration?	Support/Oppose
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Support/Oppose
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
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.267	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
13. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support/Oppose
14. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support/Oppose
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.)	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
17. What is your position on requiring candidates to include full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
19. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support/Oppose
20. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities and linking expenditures to candidates targeted?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
22. What is your position on creating an enforcement entity independent of the State Board of Elections to oversee campaign finance laws?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
24. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state's court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
29. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Support/Oppose
30. What is your position on distributing member item allocations equally among all legislators and requiring for greater accountability as expressed in S. 7007/A10116?	Support/Oppose
31. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	Support/Oppose
32. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

Having worked in the Brooklyn Borough Presidents office I have seen firsthand how large financial contributions and individuals, (whether inside or outside of the community) with money can dominated our elections. On the federal level we have seen that this problem has become worse in 2010 after the Supreme Courts Citizen United ruling, which paved the way for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money in our elections, adding to the enormous influence they already have within the political process.

In New York, I am an ardent supporter of campaign finance reform and believe that we must have stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity. I find it deplorable that campaign contributions can be used for personal use and would work to stop that.

I feel that the problem with money in politics is not so much the amount that is spent on campaigns as it is who pays for them, what they get in return, and how that affects public policy and spending priorities.

As State Senator, I will fight to insure that we have more transparency in government and that citizens are informed of issues affecting the system. We need a greater open information policy and less regulation that prevents citizens from being able to access information on the city government and vital issues that are impacting residents.

II. 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 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 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 FROM 2010 AND ACTION ON THEM

1. N/A
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

TOP FIVE 2012 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. Fight for fair affordable housing development and tenant protections.
2. Empower parents and communities to decide how schools are resourced
3. Bring more resources and vision to economic development to create real jobs.
4. Improve relationships between the police & people of color
5. Bring more resources to legal services for the poor.

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.