



2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questions related to policy issues facing the City of New York that are of concern to Citizens Union and residents of the City. We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire in our Voters Directory, on our website, and in other appropriate venues. 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 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 thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Letitia James Age: _____

Campaign Address: 100 Church Street, Suite 820 NY NY 10007

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 460-6096 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): D Campaign Manager Name: _____

Website & Email: Letitajames2013.com

Education: _____

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

Council Member 35th District for last 10 years

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: _____

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

(Please note: Citizens Union can only grant its support to candidates we have interviewed. If you would like to be interviewed, please follow up with Citizens Union staff, as resources constrain us from interviewing every candidate.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES NO

Signature of Candidate:  _____ Date: _____

CITIZENS UNION ISSUES

Please state your position on the following issues by indicating whether you support or oppose each, where applicable. Please also use the space provided below each question or on a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the questions which require a detailed answer. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

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| 1. What is your position with respect to eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system in which all candidates and all voters participate in the first round and the top two candidates advance to the second round? | Support/Oppose |
| 2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices? (Int. No. 1066) | Support/Oppose |
| 3. What is your position on requiring city agencies to report the number of applicants that they register to vote as required by current law (Int. No. 760)? | Support/Oppose |
| 4. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters? | Support/Oppose |
| 5. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: | |
| a. the borough presidents? | Support/Oppose |
| b. Conflicts of Interest Board? | Support/Oppose |
| c. the public advocate? | Support/Oppose |
| d. community boards? | Support/Oppose |
| 6. What is your position on granting the office of the Public Advocate the ability to appoint one member to the following boards: | |
| a. the Board of Standards and Appeals? | Support/Oppose |
| b. the Franchise and Concessions Review Commission? | Support/Oppose |
| c. the Conflicts of Interest Board? | Support/Oppose |
| 7. What is your position on dissolving the Commission on Public Information and Communication and transferring its major duties to the office of the Public Advocate, giving greater responsibility for expanding public access to government data, information and reports? | Support/Oppose |

ISSUES OF CITYWIDE IMPORTANCE

8. How would you use the office of the Public Advocate to impact public policy to serve the broad public interest?

I would use the bully pulpit that the Office of the Public Advocate has at its disposal to address the issues that New Yorkers are facing and to involve the public in big policy issues.

9. What would be your most important legislative and non-legislative priorities as public advocate?

I would continue to fight for more affordable housing and to hold developers accountable by making sure they build such promised housing.

10. What do you consider to be the three most important oversight functions of the Public Advocate?

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_____ **Ability to perform performance audits**

Ability to introduce legislation

_____ **Ability to litigate**

11. How best do you believe the office of the Public Advocate should be utilized? Do you believe the Public Advocate should address broad citywide issues or should be limited to oversight of specific issues?

_____ **The PA needs to focus and pick a handful of issues, but the office needs to have flexibility to address other issues that may come up and need immediate attention. A good example is the snow removal when the Mayor was out of town.**

12. How would you publicize the Public Advocate's office and its role?

_____ **I am doing that as I campaign, explaining to voters what the Public Advocate does and why we need it.**

13. What would you propose the Department of Education do to increase the ability for parents and teachers to become more meaningfully involved in the education system? What other positive changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

_____ **I would push to have parental input during the teacher evaluation process. I would like to see Community Education Councils to have more input on capital requests and expenses. I would also like to see an increase in parental involvement on the Panel for Education Policy (PEP)**

14. What discrepancies, if any, do you see between services promised to New Yorkers and services rendered? For those listed, please indicate your proposals for bringing policy closer to practice.

After Citytime we saw the cost overruns exceed the original cost by hundreds of millions of dollars. We need to develop policies that further safeguard taxpayer's money from corrupt and greedy contractors. For example, we need to hold contractors accountable to their work. If you say you can do something in "X" amount of time at the agreed amount then you will have to eat that cost – not the taxpayer. But, realistically we need to have some ability to adapt to unforeseen events that may delay a project and account for some overruns – but not to the extent we saw in Citytime.

15. What would you propose to further enhance transparency of city government? How would you utilize the responsibilities of the Public Advocate with regard to access to public information in monitoring implementation of the city's Open Data Law?

___ I would like to see equal distribution of discretionary funds-as in the case of DFTA and Youth money allocations.

___ I would utilize FOIL requests, litigation and performance audits to access public information to ensure the proper implementation of the city's Open Data Law.

16. How would you leverage the office of Public Advocate to address any of the following issues, if not discussed in answering previous questions:

- a. Affordable Housing
- b. Public Safety
- c. Public Transportation
- d. Health and the Environment
- e. Economic Development
- f. Education

CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of elected officials running for offices. 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 currently holds an office other than the one for which you are running,

- a. what were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current position? What progress have you made to keep those promises?
- b. what are your top five campaign promises you are making to voters during your campaign for this new position?

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 2009 AND ACTION ON THEM

1. ___Advocate for more money for our parks and to preserve open space_____
2. ____I would push for more land marking of neighborhoods to ensure that we protect the character of our historic neighborhoods; as I did in many parts of my district.
3. ____Advocate for more affordable housing that is permanent, instead of having an expiration date. As well as, changing the current 80/20 formula.
4. __Help improve our school by increasing capitakl funds and pushing for the removal of underperforming principles, as I did in my district with one particular school.

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5. Advocate for the expansion of Livable Streets Projects to ensure that pedestrians are safe whether they are on foot or on a bicycle.
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TOP FIVE 2013 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. **Citywide Advocates' Network** – We will redefine the Office of the Public Advocate and pattern with a network of local non-profit and faith based organizations across the City to advocate for our communities. Whether its consumer protection; trends of violence, abuse in individual neighborhoods; exploitation of tenants; specific needs of school children and parents – the Public Advocate's Office will be able to better learn and address the specific needs of individual communities.
2. **Crisis Intervention Center** – We've seen the deep holes in the City Administration's ability to respond to crises and take care of our neighborhoods when they need the most help. One need look no further than Hurricane Sandy or the winter storm from a few years ago whose snow may still be on the ground, for all we know. As Public Advocate, I'll direct my office to serve as a Crisis Intervention Center during emergencies and post-emergency periods. I will serve as a sharp scissor to help New Yorkers cut through the red tape and put the power of the Office of the Public Advocate behind every constituent complaint and request for services.
3. **Parental Education and Empowerment Program** – We know that over the last decade, parents' voices have been drowned out of the debate on how to best improve our education system. Who knows a child's needs better than his or her parents? Who could possibly care more about a child's academic success and preparation than the child's own mother or father? Under my leadership, the Public Advocate's Office will administer a Parental Education and Empowerment Program that helps parents understand how education policy impacts their children and assist them in accessing the complicated maze of the Department of Education. We will go into Parent Association meetings, into churches and synagogues and mosques, into community board meetings and anywhere else we can find parents. We will not only talk to them – and listen – and together we will improve the education offered to our children, one family at a time.
4. **Cyber Awareness and Protection Unit** – Remember that annoying sound dial-up internet used to make when we first connected to the web? It's a whole new world we live in today and New Yorkers are spending more and more time online. While we're able to pay our bills and communicate with friends and catch up on the news faster than ever, we're also encountering problems that weren't present for previous generations. That's why I want to create the Cyber Awareness and Protection Unit. It's the perfect opportunity for the Public Advocate to step in and help. From cyber bullying to identity theft to protecting users' privacy, we will increase awareness and help victims, no matter how young or old, report abuses, and follow through.
5. **Public Advocate at Your Doorstep Initiative** – The Office of the Public Advocate belongs to all New Yorkers; they shouldn't have to be governmental experts to seek help. We will bring the Office to where the constituents are. We will hold town hall-style forums in every borough. I will commit to visiting every single neighborhood in the City within the first eight months of taking office. We will make sure the public knows that when there is a problem, you can call the Public Advocate for help (unless it's an immediate emergency, in which case you should call 911 first)

6. Immigrant Support Unit – Immigrants aren't just in our businesses, schools, and churches. In New York City, immigrants are part of our DNA. That's why the Office of the Public Advocate will include an Immigrant Support Unit that focuses on helping immigrants access vital services and assist them in overcoming obstacles through education and empowerment. We will work with the many immigrant support non-profit organizations and other groups in immigrant-rich communities to crack down on fraud and crimes that target immigrants and help them navigate the path to citizenship. We will help make sure immigrants know they have a voice in government.