



CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
PUBLIC ADVOCATE
ELECTION 2009

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 the citizens 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. In order to receive Citizens Union's "preferred" or "endorsed" status, in addition to completing the questionnaire, candidates must participate in an interview with Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee.

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Bill de Blasio Age: 48

Campaign Address: Friends of Bill de Blasio 2009 / 320 7th Avenue, #278 / Brooklyn, NY, 11215

Campaign Telephone Number: 347-710-9980 Fax: 718-855-7898

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Party Campaign Manager Name: Jillian Waldman

Website & Email: www.billdeblasio.com deblasio2009@gmail.com

Education: BA, New York University; MA, Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): New York City Council, district 39, 2002 - Present.

Previous Offices and Campaigns: NYC School Board Member, District 15; Campaign Manager for Hillary Clinton's 2000 U.S. Senate bid; Regional Director for U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development; Director of Operations, New York City Council; Top Aide to Mayor David Dinkins

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

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES X NO

(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Preferred Candidate" or "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed. We will make every effort to interview candidates in this race.)

Signature of Candidate: Bill de Blasio Date: 8/2/09

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 regarding the creation of a Charter Revision Commission to review specifically the roles of the various offices of government and how well government has functioned since the 1988 and 1989 charter review commissions? | Support
X | Oppose |
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I would be very supportive of such an effort, especially with regard to how we can foster greater citizen engagement and democratic process in our City government.

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| 2. What is your position on the passage of state legislation that would allow for other charter measures, such as those initiated by the City Council or by citizens, to appear on the ballot at the same time as when there is a charter reform proposal initiated by a charter commission appointed by the Mayor? | Support
X | Oppose |
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| 3. What is your position on restructuring New York's current board of elections model to eliminate political party responsibility for overall election administration and replace it with a system that narrows political party involvement to certification of candidate petitions and the actual counting of votes? | Support | Oppose |
|---|---------|--------|

I agree that the board is in need of significant reform and fully endorse Citizens Union's work to critically examine the role of political parties in its administration. Any reform effort must result in a system that is structured for and capable of upholding standards for fair, accessible elections. Achieving this goal requires a comprehensive approach to election reform that addresses issues including: if and how political parties should continue to play a role in elections administration; what obstacles exist to ballot access and how we can create legal mechanisms to ensure that candidates in substantial compliance with the law are not barred from participation; what improvements can be made at polling sites, such as modern voting machines; and how to increase voter participation, such as through same day registration, early voting and no-excuse absentee voting.

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| | Support | Oppose |
| 4. What is your position on having an election administration system where there is a local elections executive director appointed by the mayor upon recommendation by a new board that is chosen by the mayor and the city council? | | |

The board of elections' structure must allow it to fairly administer elections and be held accountable to the public. I think we should consider an even more independent selection system, such as through an independent commission, rather than relying on elected officials. Additionally, to truly create more accountability we need to identify the changes and clarifications we can make in our election law that will foster an approach to local elections administration that is transparent, evenly applied and designed to facilitate, rather than prohibit, the participation of both qualified voters and qualified candidates in elections. We must rely on the law and not politics in adjudicatory matters to help ensure fairness in elections and to remove any skepticism that the public may have.

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| 5. What is your position with respect to allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries? | Support | Oppose
X |
| 6. What is your position on term limits for elected officials? | Support | Oppose |

I personally believe that New York City should have a two-term limit for the Mayor and a three-term limit for the City Council, but do not believe we should apply these same limits to legislators at the state and federal level. Most importantly, however, any discussion of term limits must address the process by which term limits are established and changed -- we must ensure that we have extensive public debate about this issue and that it only be decided by public referendum.

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| 7. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that changes to term limits may only be approved by the voters? | Support
X | Oppose |
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I am very supportive of such a measure. In the fall of 2008 I led a citywide effort to prevent the Mayor and the City Council from changing term limits via legislation, and I am a proud co-sponsor of legislation that would change the law to ensure that only the voters can decide this issue.

- b. Education,
- c. Budget and Fiscal Responsibility,
- d. Health and the Environment, and
- e. Economic Development?

These are some of the most important issues affecting New Yorkers and here some of the ways I would address them:

Affordable Housing – through my appointee to the City Planning Commission, who would share my priorities with regard to maximizing community benefits in the landuse process; organizing NYCHA tenants around a legislative agenda that would increase public housing funding; and ensuring that Section 8 voucher holders continue to be protected from discrimination.

Education – by ensuring that critical DOE data is readily available to the public, including via the Public Advocate’s website; utilizing the office to organize public school parents and communities to ensure that they are partners in public education; and through appointments to the Citywide Council on Special Education.

Budget and Fiscal Responsibility – through the Public Advocate’s role with the Independent Budget Office (IBO) Advisory Committee; as an appointee to the Board of NYCERS; and by performing tough oversight over costly programs that have produced questionable results, such as the city’s job training programs.

Health and Environment – advocating for State legislation that would establish renewable energy targets for New York City; supporting City legislation to green our building stock; and promoting policies to reduce New York City’s carbon “foodprint” and increase healthy food access in low income communities.

Economic Development – conducting an inventory of vacant government space to identify potential business incubator space; working with the Department of Small Business Services to overhaul the City’s program for Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises; convening leaders representing New York City’s diverse array of cultural, academic, business, scientific and entertainment sectors to lay out a vision for New York City’s economic recovery that draws upon our City’s unique strengths, and develop a City, State and Federal policy agenda to achieve it.

13. What is your position on the role of the Public Advocate in addressing complaints on broad citywide issues versus limiting the Public Advocate’s oversight to specific issues?

The Public Advocate works to ensure that government is responsive to the people and acts in their interest. The Public Advocate must perform both of these functions to do this successfully. Our City needs a watchdog that will fight for communities and make change on a citywide scale. At the same time, we need an advocate who can help any New Yorker to resolve a problem or navigate complex bureaucracies. In many cases, one function informs the other – sometimes a citywide issue or legislative campaign begins as constituent a issue, and sometimes a constituent case can open our eyes to larger, system problems that the Public Advocate should address.

14. How would you publicize the Public Advocate’s office and its role?

Ensuring that my constituents have clear, consistent and current information about issues that affect them has been a top priority throughout my tenure at the Council. When an important

message must reach the community, we employ whatever means necessary, including: local papers, blogs (which have become an increasingly essential tool), press releases, robo calls, fliers, as well as collaboration with other elected officials and community groups to share information. With regard to important landuse items in particular, which can often be difficult for residents to follow, it has become common practice in my office to individually flier the entire affected neighborhood with information about upcoming Council hearings, BSA hearings, and other critical meetings.

As Public Advocate I would expand this type of proactive outreach to ensure that the public is aware of the office and its ability to assist on issues that affect the lives of New Yorkers.

15. 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 positives changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

As parents of two children in public schools, my wife and I know the anxiety all parents face about ensuring our kids have access to a quality public education. Our city must build on the progress we have made over the past several years under Mayoral Control, but at the same time we need to reform school governance in important ways. We must strengthen community, parental and teacher involvement, and increase accountability and transparency in schools.

Parents and the community are powerful allies to teachers -- they provide the support needed for students to attend school each and every day, and be motivated to achieve their highest potential. It is ultimately in the interest of our public school system to include parents in important decisions and open conversations about education. I have issued a Public School Parents' Bill of Rights that responds to issues such as overcrowding of zoned schools and the DOE cell phone ban by guaranteeing fundamental rights and expectations for parents in the school system. The Parents' Bill of Rights would ensure that we treat parents, teachers, administrators and DOE representatives alike with the same mutual respect, and provide parents with the right resources and tools to perform their role effectively. As Public Advocate, I will organize parents and communities to build support for the Parents' Bill of Rights and urge the Department of Education to adopt it as policy, instead of its existing, far more limited parent bill of rights. The bill of rights includes numerous rights for public school parents such as access to seats in local schools, advance information about changes that affect families, and open lines of communication with school representatives who can solve problems within schools.

Additionally, I believe we must increase transparency, accountability and community involvement. I pledge to use my office to ensure that the public and teachers themselves have greater access to school performance and financial data, and to maximize the community's role in local decisions involving school policy and school siting.

16. Taking into consideration the lessons learned from the debates surrounding congestion pricing and the Ravitch Commission's recommendations to provide the MTA with long-term funding, what do you think should be done to address the MTA's fiscal solvency issues and ensure that the burden for funding the MTA are equitably distributed amongst all stakeholders?

New York City's mass transit system not only is the lifeblood of this city, but it is also what makes us one of the greenest cities in the nation. I believe strongly that we cannot let fares increase and service decrease. I was open to Speaker Silver's proposal for \$2 tolls on the East and Harlem River bridges -- the proposal was both fair and reasonable because the tolls would be fixed to the rate of a subway fare and the funds would be used to preserve bus lines and subway lines facing cut backs -- and I support other funding measures, such as a payroll tax and car registration fees.

17. What would you propose to ensure that charter mandated elected offices receive equitable budget allocations?

As Public Advocate I will advance legislation to ensure that we protect the budgets of our City's oversight entities. In July, I introduced legislation that would accomplish this by a) setting the budget of the Civilian Complaint Review Board as a percentage of the NYPD budget, much as the Independent Budget Office is funded at a set percentage of the budget of the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget; and b) allowing the Conflicts of Interest Board, Comptroller and Public Advocate to submit their budgets independently and not subject them to changes by the Mayor or the City Council, similar to how the City Council currently submits its budget.

18. How would you propose the city deal with the affordable housing?

Working New Yorkers are the backbone of our city. Here are some of the approaches I would use to keep New York City affordable.

Principles of Development - I believe we need to establish a set of Principles of Development, a new rulebook for developers who want to do business in New York City. I have promoted this model in my Council district over the past several years. Development must happen with communities, not to communities. As Public Advocate, I will engage communities during the land use process to help ensure that they obtain critical information from developers regarding a project's social and economic impact on the community. I will also promote this approach to development through my appointment to the City Planning Commission.

NYCHA - The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is suffering from enormous budget gaps as well as deteriorating infrastructure--but we can't solve these problems on the backs of our children, families and seniors. Cutting NYCHA community programs and raising rent is not the answer. As Public Advocate, I will launch a NYCHA tenant organizing campaign. By working together and remaining steadfast in our commitment, we can harness the power of the over 400,000 New Yorkers who call NYCHA their home to secure the safe and reliable affordable housing our city needs. I will provide technical assistance to NYCHA tenant organizations, including training for tenant leaders, and support for organizing campaigns around important issues such as public housing funding legislation in Albany and Washington.

Rent Reform in Albany - As Public Advocate I will continue to press for the passage of critical legislation in Albany that would protect renters, including the repeal of vacancy decontrol and protections for Mitchell Lama tenants.

19. What would you propose to further enhance transparency regarding the relationships between elected officials, their families, and nonprofits that receive funding from New York City?

While we have made progress over the past few years, there is more to be done to reform the Council budget process. To make the budget process even more transparent, organizations that apply for Council funds should be required to post their funding application and all related materials (including conflicts of interest disclosures) on a public, searchable, online database. To ensure accountability, any group that has received Council funds should undergo a rigorous audit after the budget is passed to verify that funds are being spent according to their designated purpose.

CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of incumbents running for re-election. 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 and what progress have you made to keep those promises, and why or why have you not fulfilled 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 2005 AND ACTION ON THEM

1. Strengthening our public schools - In 2008 I led the citywide effort to restore \$129 million in classroom funding that had been cut by the Mayor; I have secured millions in funding for local public education projects in my district over the past several years.
2. Protecting our environment - I authored and secured the passage of the country's first municipal electronic waste recycling law; I performed effective oversight over the Department of Education's school recycling program and now the number of school recycling coordinators has tripled and the DOE has started providing them with training.
3. Expanding affordable housing options for New Yorkers - I authored and secured passage of Introduction 61-A, which makes it illegal to discriminate against Section 8 voucher holders in New York City; I played a key role in reforming New York's 421-a program to create incentives for developers to build more affordable housing.
4. Protecting Children - Since 2006 I have secured funding for the Child Safety Initiative, which lowers preventive services caseloads to allow for more thorough and individualized care for children and families; in the most recent budget I led the fight to prevent a 100-person child welfare staff reduction.
5. Preserving Child Care - I have led many successful efforts to defend subsidized child care centers from closure, including 125 child care classrooms in the most recent budget; since 2006 I have secured funding for the Providers Choice program, which helps home-based child care programs that provide subsidized child care to purchase basic supplies and learning materials for their programs.

TOP FIVE 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. Education - Increasing parent engagement in public schools by providing opportunities for parents to offer meaningful input into school policies and programs before decisions are made, particularly decisions affecting their children, local schools and school siting.
2. Affordable Housing - Promoting the creation of affordable housing through the landuse process and organizing communities around development projects.
3. Protecting Vital Services - Ensuring that preserving critical City services (such as the 16 fire houses or 100 child welfare positions in the past budget) is a top priority in every year's budget, especially in difficult fiscal times.
4. Government Transparency and Accountability - Providing mechanisms to assist the public in obtaining public information from city agencies; ensuring that government oversight entities have adequate funding, access to critical information, and sufficient independence from the entities they are mandated to oversee.
5. Reforming the Civilian Complaint Review Board -- Improving civilian oversight and restoring public confidence in the CCRB through measures such as increasing CCRB independence, enhancing CCRB authority, and increasing CCRB outreach to communities.