



## 2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

---

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: **Stephen Pierson**

Age: **37**

Campaign Address: **96 Pierrepont St, #4, Brooklyn, NY 11201**

Campaign Telephone Number: **(347) 470-0388**

Fax: **(347) 521-3413**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democratic**

Campaign Manager Name: **Diana González**

Website & Email: **piersonforcouncil.com, info@piersonforcouncil.com**

Education: **BA, Brown University**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): **Director, Canteen Arts**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: **Community Board 2, Youth, Education, & Cultural Affairs Committee; Kings County Democratic County Committee**

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? **YES**

*(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**

Signature of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

7-10-2013

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

**Please state your position on the following issues by indicating whether you support or oppose each. You may elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.**

**VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM**

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?	<b>Support</b>
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)	<b>Support</b>
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? (Int. No. 721)	<b>Support</b>
4. 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)?	<b>Support</b>
5. What is your position on transmitting electronically voter registration information collected by city agencies to the Board of Elections in the City of New York?	<b>Support</b>
6. What is your position on requiring the Board of Elections to report performance metrics to the City Council that conform to the Mayor’s Management Report? (Int. No. 778)	<b>Support</b>
7. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	<b>Support</b>
8. What is your position on expanding the Voter Guide published by the Campaign Finance Board to cover all races occurring in New York City, such as state and federal contests, and providing the opportunity for voters to receive the guide electronically rather than in print form? (Int. No. 769)	<b>Support</b>

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

9. What is your position on eliminating matching funds for contributions bundled by lobbying organizations or lobbyists?	<b>Support</b>
10. What is your position on banning placement agents from bundling contributions for any elected official who influences the selection of pension investors?	<b>Support</b>
11. What is your position on prohibiting participants in the city's campaign finance program from using public matching funds to purchase strategic campaign consulting services from firms that also provide lobbying services?	<b>Support</b>

**CITY COUNCIL REFORM**

12. What is your position on creating a bill drafting service independent of the Speaker's Office, similar to the New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?	<b>Support</b>
13. What is your position on the following proposals enabling Council committees to function more effectively and independently of the speaker :	
a. Should committee chairs have the ability to hire at least one committee staffer?	<b>Support</b>
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<b>Support</b>
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<b>Support</b>
d. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	<b>Support</b>
14. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	<b>Support</b>
15. What is your position on limiting stipends or "lulus" to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	<b>Oppose</b>
16. When the Quadrennial Compensation Commission is reconvened, what is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation only apply prospectively to the following term?	<b>Support</b>

17. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<b>Support</b>
18. What is your position on increasing transparency of discretionary funding by requiring the list of capital and expense funds and their sponsors be provided to councilmembers and the public three days in advance of any vote, and expanding the online searchable database of expense funds to include all capital fund recipients and applicants?	<b>Support</b>

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT**

19. What is your position on reducing the frequency of stop, question and frisks by conducting stops more judiciously?	<b>Support</b>
20. What is your position on establishing the Commission to Combat Police Corruption (CCPC) as a permanent commission in the City Charter while empowering the CCPC to issue subpoenas?	<b>Support</b>
21. What is your position on enhancing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) authority to initiate an investigation into reported or known incidents of police misconduct without receipt of a formal complaint?	<b>Support</b>
22. What is your position on granting the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) with the authority to prosecute officers found guilty of lying during CCRB investigations?	<b>Support</b>
23. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<b>Support</b>

**BUDGET REFORM**

24. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for:	<b>Support</b>
a. the borough presidents?	
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	<b>Support</b>
c. the public advocate ?	<b>Support</b>
d. community boards?	<b>Support</b>
25. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	<b>Support</b>

26. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	<b>Support</b>
--	----------------

**LAND USE AND COMMUNITY BOARD REFORM**

27. What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough presidents report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments? (Int. No. 913)	<b>Support</b>
28. What is your position on establishing a formal standardized and transparent process for community board appointments including written applications, interviews of candidates, and filling vacancies within 30 days?	<b>Support</b>

**Additional Comments:**

I am running for office because I am outraged by the amount of cronyism and backroom deals that are ubiquitous in the City Council. As such, I will tirelessly work to implement numerous new regulations and transparency mechanisms into the Council. Nowhere is corruption and cronyism more rife—and detrimental—than in the (mis)use of discretionary funds.

First and foremost, the Speaker's power needs to be limited: Discretionary funds should be distributed among councilmembers in a standardized, equitable manner—and not used to leverage obedience to the Speaker.

Next, I strongly support a more transparent system of allocating discretionary funds; it is ludicrous that there is no opportunity for public review before a final decision is made.

Finally, discretionary funds should only be spent on organizations that directly benefit residents of the district that their councilmember represents. There should be a regulation enacted that requires this. Residents of my district are particularly frustrated that member item funds allocated for this district are continually spent elsewhere. The recent situation with Councilmember Recchia is a further testament to this problem.

## II. CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of candidates running for office. As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing your top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position.

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises 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 2013 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. I will ensure that the Greenpoint Landing and 77 Commercial Street development plans include sufficient affordable housing units and budget for community infrastructure improvements, especially park space.
2. I will address the imminent overcrowding of Downtown Brooklyn public schools before it reaches a crisis point. I will also fight for universal access to pre-kindergarten.
3. I will propose and support increased transparency and accountability in the City Council's budgetary process and discretionary fund allocation. I will also support reforms in the appointment of Community Board members, such as term limits and greater transparency and community involvement in the appointment process.
4. I will support mandating the inclusion of LGBT history in our public school curriculum (similar to California's FAIR Education Act), which has been shown to significantly lessen the amount of bullying that LGBT students endure.
5. Greenpoint's public transportation system is depressingly insufficient. I will therefore strongly advocate for increased East River Ferry and G train service.

**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee**  
**via fax to 212.227.0345 or via email to [candidates@citizensunion.org](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)**  
**Call us at 212-227-0342 with any questions.**