



## 2014 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State and our interest in reforming state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than July 11<sup>th</sup>.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office in order to determine our “Preferred Candidates” for the September 9<sup>th</sup> Primary Election, and our “Endorsed Candidates” for the November 4<sup>th</sup> General Election.

If you seek our support, we will 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 and have not heard from us.**

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:  Tony Avella  Age:  62

Campaign Address:  213-33 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bayside, NY 11361

Campaign Telephone Number: (  718  )  224-2130  Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation(s):  Democrat  Campaign Manager Name:  Seth Urbinder

Website & Email:  tonyavellafornewyork.com - tonyavellafornewyork@gmail.com

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

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

State Senator – 2011 to present

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of New York City Council - 8 years

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

Signature of Candidate:  Tony Avella  Date:  7/1/14

## 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 the redistricting proposition amending the constitution on the November ballot that would create an independent commission with appointees split evenly between the majority and minority parties?	<b>Support</b>
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 strict two-party division of governance and operation?	<b>Support</b>
3. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by lowering signature requirements and utilizing less burdensome witness signature requirements?	<b>Support</b>
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?	<b>Support</b>
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote? Currently those on parole may obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief to have their right to vote restored, but few of these are granted, and they cannot be applied for immediately upon release.	<b>Need further study</b>
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Voter Registration?	<b>Support</b>
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	<b>Support</b>
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times over a period of several days?	<b>Support</b>
9. What is your position on reforming the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by <a href="#">S.161/A.5290</a> ?	<b>Support</b>
10. 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 updated automatically?	<b>Support</b>
11. What is your position on consolidating the state and federal primary to the third week in June, while ensuring that the legislative session ends at least two weeks prior?	<b>Oppose</b>
12. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for primary elections in citywide election in New York City, effectively eliminating the need for a separate runoff election?	<b>Support</b>

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

13. What is your position on establishing a matching public financing system for state legislative and statewide races similar to the New York City model?	<b>Support</b>
14. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	<b>Support</b>
15. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	<b>Support</b>

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM (CONTINUED)**

16. What is your position on limiting or banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would have the constitutionally-protected right to form separate political action committees.)	<b>Support</b>
17. 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?	<b>Support</b>
18. What is your position on requiring candidates to include the full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	<b>Support</b>
19. 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?	<b>Support</b>
20. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	<b>Support</b>
21. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities?	<b>Support</b>
22. What is your position on limiting the ability of candidates to accumulate “war chests” and then transferring funds raised in one race to another in which they run?	<b>Support</b>
23. What is your position on clarifying the definition of coordination between candidates and political committees to ensure candidate contribution limits are not exceeded, and expenditures and contributions are properly reported?	<b>Support</b>

**JUDICIAL REFORM**

24. 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?	<b>Support</b>
25. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state’s court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	<b>Undecided</b>

**ETHICS REFORM**

26. What is your position on empowering the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases involving public corruption, including serious election law malfeasance?	<b>Support</b>
27. 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?	<b>Support</b>

**BUDGET REFORM**

28. 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?	<b>Support</b>
29. 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?	<b>Support</b>
30. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	<b>Support</b>
31. What is your position on ensuring adequate disclosure and itemization of discretionary funds, including member items and lump sum funds, as well as reporting on their usage?	<b>Support</b>
32. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	<b>Support</b>
33. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	<b>Support</b>
34. 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	<b>Support</b>



## 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 LAST ELECTION AND ACTION ON THEM

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### TOP FIVE 2014 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

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 [candidates@citizensunion.org](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)  
 Call us at 212-227-0342 with any questions.