



**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
ELECTION 2013**

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: Kenneth P. Thompson      Age: 47

Campaign Address: 1015 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11238

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 622-1560

Fax: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat      Campaign Manager Name: Kenneth Ebie

Website & Email:      [www.kenthompson4da.com](http://www.kenthompson4da.com); [kenthompson2013@gmail.com](mailto:kenthompson2013@gmail.com)

Education: B.A., John Jay College of Criminal Justice, *magna cum laude*; J.D., New York University Law School

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Founding Partner, Thompson Wigdor LLP

Previous Offices and Campaigns: N/A

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

Please state your position on the following issues by using the space provided below each question or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the following questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

1. What trends do you see in criminal activity that the district attorney's office should address?

Among the most alarming of trends is the seemingly endless string of public corruption in Kings County, and perhaps more alarming the general lack of engagement on these cases by the current DA. From Vito Lopez to Carl Kruger and beyond, we cannot have a DA so closely connected to the political establishment that he cannot and will not take on public corruption cases because of conflicts of interest. As Brooklyn's next DA, I will use all available resources to ensure public corruption is rooted out locally, and that we aren't waiting for Federal or State prosecutors to clean up our mess for us.

2. What role do you think the district attorney plays in anti-corruption efforts and building public trust? What changes would you make to the structure of the office to help bolster public confidence in the DA's office?

The Brooklyn DA should be the top law enforcement officer in Kings County. This shouldn't just apply to some cases of illegal activity, and it should especially apply to public corruption. Part of what will make this bureau successful will be staff and resources. I intend to staff the bureau with additional, well qualified ADA's, clerks, and investigators/analysts.

But it's not just about staffing, it's about an aggressive and pro-active approach to public integrity investigations. When it comes to elected officials, much of what they do lives in the public sphere. From expense reports, to per diems, to income and outside employment disclosures, to member item allocations, there is endless data that can be collected and manipulated to generate investigative leads for investigators and prosecutors.

We saw this with the Boyland case – shortly after his arrest, a report was published that Boyland seemingly abused the legislative per diem system, potentially fraudulently. Before it became a press story, this data was out there in the public sphere.

In my DA's office, we will not solely rely on whistleblowers or newspaper reports to go get cases, we will be digging them up ourselves. The renewed focus and additional resources to this bureau will mean that the people of Brooklyn will have a DA on the public corruption beat for the first time in recent memory.

3. To what extent would your office use the district attorney's existing authority to investigate and monitor elected officials' conduct in relation to issues like campaign finance compliance and proper use of government resources and influence?

To the fullest extent of the law. As I said before, my job as DA will be to go after all of those that have broken the law in Brooklyn, not just those who aren't powerful and well-connected. To the extent that these types of campaign finance violations are within my jurisdiction, I will be prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law, and will be actively seeking referrals from state and city campaign finance agencies and partnering with DOI and others to make sure these cases are being handled by our office.

4. Do you support Governor Cuomo's Program Bill No. 3, the Public Trust Act, which strengthens laws against bribery and adds new penalties for those convicted of fraud? Are there additional statewide legislative reforms that you would advocate for if elected to office?

Absolutely. In addition to these measures, I can and will fully support proposals originating in Albany or here in NYC to more publically finance campaigns. And in addition to that, I will support any proposals that make campaign finance disclosures more transparent and easy to navigate and look up. For instance, campaign finance in the state does not make it mandatory to disclose your employer if you are giving as an individual, which makes the relationship between you and the candidate you are giving to more opaque. This needs to change, and as DA, I will support any legislative proposals that change this and other campaign finance practices that do not fully disclose a donor to the public.

5. Do you believe more needs to be done to ease the re-entry of formerly incarcerated persons into society and if so, what would you propose?

While I believe that the most effective approach to crime prevention involves providing opportunities to young people to prevent them from entering a life of crime, it is also true that much crime in our communities is committed by formerly incarcerated individuals.

As District Attorney, I will build upon the successes of current re-entry programs offered by the Kings County DA's Office, by allocating appropriate funds within my budget and exploring opportunities for private sector partnerships, in the form of funding, job training programs and job placement.

When formerly incarcerated individuals have demonstrated a commitment to becoming productive members of society, we as a society should provide a second chance. Our families and our communities will be safer and more secure because of it.

6. What should the role of the district attorney be in addressing issues relating to terrorism? How would you ensure citizens' privacy rights while fulfilling this role?

To the extent it is within my office's jurisdiction, I will ensure we strike the right balance between security and civil liberties. This means that we need to continue doing the things the city has been doing to deputize our citizens to be effective watchdogs and to notify law enforcement immediately if they see something suspicious. It also means making sure that charges are brought only when there is sufficient evidence of criminal activity and that we are not violating civil rights of any community when it comes to protecting and policing our citizens.

7. Do you feel that the number of incidents of police misconduct is a problem? If so, what would you propose to facilitate more effective oversight of police misconduct? What steps, if any, would you take to ensure that police stops were lawful before prosecuting?

Yes I do and I think most of it has to do with the misguided policy of Stop and Frisk. One of our prime directives in law enforcement is to build trust within our communities and show communities that have long been neglected by law enforcement that the police are there to protect and serve. To that end and in its current incarnation, Stop and Frisk is not working for the citizens of this borough. It is not working for our borough's safety or security.

We need to be honest about what Stop and Frisk does and does not do. For instance, out of the nearly 1,500 guns recovered in Brooklyn in 2011, only about 20% were recovered due to Stop

and Frisk searches. This means that out of the 228,354 stops in Brooklyn that year, 0.13% of them were successful in recovering firearms.

At the same time, I have a very personal relationship to this issue. My mother worked hard as a police officer to provide for us, I grew up in NYCHA housing, and I have two young children for whom – like any other parent - my highest priority is their safety. So I uniquely understand the balance that must be struck between good police work and public safety, particularly in communities of color.

As I have stated before, Stop and Frisk is an overused (and too often abused) tactic in Brooklyn and throughout New York City, but it can also be a valuable law enforcement tool – if used in the right way. Specifically, the necessary standard of ‘reasonable suspicion’ must be met to guarantee that the civil rights of all New Yorkers are protected, and to produce evidence that is useful to prosecutors.

When Stop and Frisk is done right, it can save lives. But when it’s done wrong, it can only erode the relationship between the community and the police. As Brooklyn DA, I will work with law enforcement on the ground to ensure Stop and Frisk is done the right way – and that we are no longer presented with the false choice between public safety and civil rights.

8. Do you support requiring that police interrogations be videotaped?

Without a doubt. As I mentioned before, everyone in the public sphere should be held accountable, and the first step toward real accountability is transparency. The public needs to know that all of us – including law enforcement – are all held to the same standard.

9. What would your priorities be as district attorney? How would they differ from the incumbent’s? What would you change in the incumbent’s approach to fulfilling the responsibilities of the district attorney? What about your background and approach to the position differentiates you from the others running for district attorney?

### Public Integrity

During Hynes' tenure, there has been a growing epidemic of public corruption scandals, which have resulted in many high profile cases brought by law enforcement. Many of these disgraced elected officials served in Brooklyn – such as William Boyland, Carl Krueger and Vito Lopez.

With very few exceptions, these cases have been brought by other State and Federal law enforcement entities. While there has not been a shortage of corrupt elected officials in Brooklyn, Brooklyn's DA has been conspicuously quiet in going after public corruption right under his nose.

This is why it will be among my highest priorities to strengthen the Corruption Bureau within the DA's office.

### Sexual Violence Against Women

We have seen a very disturbing trend in Brooklyn over the last several years. Overall violent crime (as measured by crimes reported to the police) increased by 3.7% from 2007-2011, but rape increased by 37% over the same period of time.

According to a recent article in the New York Times, this year, "we have seen a 23% increase in the number of rapes in Brooklyn, with 137 rapes reported through mid-April compared with 111 during the same period the year before. The number is also higher compared with the same period in 2011. Citywide, the number of rapes is about 7 percent higher than last year. About half of the reported rapes in Brooklyn were in four precincts that include the neighborhoods of Flatbush, Brownsville, Bushwick and East New York."

As research shows us, the sad truth is that these numbers understate the scale and scope of this epidemic. Many victims of rape and sexual assault never even have the opportunity to see their perpetrators brought to justice because they are too embarrassed or ashamed to report the crime, or they fear their claims will not be taken seriously.

As a husband, son and father to a young daughter, this trend is deeply troubling to me, and when elected DA, I will use the full authority of the office to reverse it.

We need to devote more resources to this problem. We need cops on the beat, and much more targeted research that identifies which neighborhoods are most affected by these crimes. We also need to ensure we are setting a good example by prosecuting sex criminals to the fullest extent of the law.

But there needs to be much more public education around this issue. We need to be teaching our young men that the objectification of women is never acceptable. As DA, I will help initiate a Boroughwide discussion about the causes of and appropriate response to violence against women.

#### Transparency and Technology

As the recent wave of wrongful convictions and questionable prosecutions that have come to light in Brooklyn have shown, when law enforcement relies mainly on technology and science, and relies less on unreliable forms of evidence, we are better equipped to ensure that guilty people are locked up and innocent people are set free.

And though, as was recently reported, the Brooklyn DA's office is finally beginning to examine 50 decades-old cases they think may have been prosecuted under questionable circumstances, law enforcement needs to be vigilant in looking for and exploiting all new technology to help prosecutors stay one step ahead of criminals. They also need to use technology to leverage the resources of the general public. And, perhaps most importantly, we need to use technology to improve transparency so that the people of Brooklyn can hold our office accountable in real time, not decades after one or a series of convictions.

As it relates to technology, the Brooklyn DA's office is far behind the times on a fundamental level. For instance, this year, the Manhattan DA's office will open a cybercrimes lab with about \$4.2 million it received in assistance from the New York City Council. They did this because they recognized that in 2013, there is very sophisticated technology being employed to carry out





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## 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 implement one standard of justice for all communities in Brooklyn.
2. My office will provide proper training to all Assistant DAs on the standard of “reasonable suspicion” in all Stop and Frisk cases.
3. I will implement innovative solutions to combat the scourge of gun violence, including public-private partnerships.
4. I will investigate and prosecute public corruption.
5. I will establish a Labor Unit to investigate and prosecute violations of labor law.

**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 212-227-0342 Rachael Fauss ext. 22 or Alex Camarda ext. 24 with any questions.**