



**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
COMPTROLLER  
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. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed. We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Eliot Spitzer

Age: 54

Campaign Address: 256 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue New York, NY

Campaign Telephone Number: 212.696.4900

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation(s): Dem.

Campaign Manager Name: Miriam Hess

Website & Email: [www.spitzer2013.com](http://www.spitzer2013.com)

Education: Princeton University, Harvard Law School

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

Previous Offices and Campaigns: \_ Attorney General, New York State; Governor, New York State

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

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES  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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.

1. What is your position on Comptroller Liu's and Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to consolidate the five pension boards into one Pension Investment Board consisting of appointees from labor and government?	Support/Oppose
2. What is your position on requiring that all pension fund trustees have financial or investment experience or academic training?	Support/Oppose
3. What is your position on prohibiting pension fund trustees from having in the last four years served as a lobbyist, political party official, elected official serving the city, fundraiser for a city candidate or bundler for one of the appointing authorities to the pension boards?	Support/Oppose
4. What is your position on clarifying the city's lobbying laws so that firms and individuals representing firms seeking to do business with the city's pension funds are indeed lobbying, and therefore subject to disclosure and other requirements of the lobbying laws?	Support/Oppose
5. What is your position on changing the city's ethics laws to explicitly name the city's current pension boards so they are subject to the city's ethics laws?	Support/Oppose
6. What is your position on providing online, as part of Pension NYC in near real time, firms and individuals representing firms that lobby the office or the trustees?	Support/Oppose
7. What is your position on codifying in city law Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules that prohibit placement agents from bundling contributions and subjecting them to lower doing business contribution limits?	Support/Oppose
8. What is your position on requiring the current pension funds establishing websites that reveal pension board trustees, the board's mission statement, by-laws, resolutions passed, investment performance and links to or actual laws, and rules and regulations pertaining to the fund?	Support/Oppose
9. What is your position on public hearings and passage of legislation to update restrictions on asset allocation in state law so they reflect the Prudent Investor Act or other prevailing standards?	Support/Oppose

10. 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
11. 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
12. 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
13. 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
14. 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

15. How you would define and operate the office of Comptroller?

The Comptroller is the City's CFO, responsible for ensuring that the City's resources are used responsibly, efficiently, and to the benefit of all New Yorkers. In addition to protecting the pensions of our city's workers, the office should leverage its power to make sure those companies with which we invest behave responsibly with respect to their shareholders and the larger public. The office is also responsible for scrutinizing city contracts and procurement procedures and rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse. The City should award contracts based on merit and value for the City's residents, not politics and personal relationships. The bidding and procurement processes should be transparent and fair. To that end, the office must create enhanced opportunities for MWBEs. The comptroller's office has a variety of powers and roles, but the bottom line is I will operate the office in much the same way that I ran the Attorney General's office – to ensure equal opportunity for all New Yorkers.

16. What would you do as Comptroller to improve pension investment returns? How would you limit or reduce costs associated with pension investment fees and consultants?

It is critical that we ensure the soundness of our City's pension funds. It is unconscionable to think that city workers, who dedicated their careers to serving their city, could one day not receive the benefits they rightfully owned. But we must also be mindful that our mounting pension obligations are not sustainable over the long term. Any responsible financial steward knows that as a city we'll have to explore a variety of options to ensure the solvency of our retirement funds. The adequacy of our returns should be measured against a realistic benchmark. Setting reasonable expectations for returns guards against the temptation to take unnecessary risks with our workers' money. As comptroller, I will make sure that our City's pension funds are allocated to make solid returns without unnecessary risks and exorbitant fees.

17. What is your position regarding managing pension fund investments and the appearance of or actual conflicts of interest that can arise from investment firms seeking pension business given the corruption scandals surrounding this activity in recent years?

My record on dealing with corruption speaks for itself – I don't tolerate it. Whether we're talking about Wall Street or elected officials, I've taken on the biggest and most powerful interests in New York. We cannot tolerate conflicts of interest when it comes to investing our pension funds. The process of choosing our investment firms must be transparent, fair, and merit based. Our pension business cannot be bought or handed out in return for favors. There is too much at stake.

18. How would you utilize the Comptroller's auditing power to ensure government agencies and the contracts they engage in result in cost-effective quality delivery of services?

All city agencies should be audited regularly and as necessary to ensure that services are delivered in the most efficient manner possible. We must closely monitor the size and

scope of city agencies, the quality of their services, and the cost-effectiveness with which they are delivered. We can't just count on the mayor or the agencies to monitor themselves. The comptroller is ultimately accountable for ensuring that our tax dollars are spent in a productive and efficient way.

19. How would you utilize the authority of the Comptroller's office to ensure the fiscal health and integrity of city spending?

It is the Comptroller's job to monitor city spending and make sure that each dollar is spent wisely. The office must scrutinize city contracts and procurement processes, monitor the City's budget and cash position, audit agencies to ensure they are delivering services efficiently, and root out waste and fraud. And the office must accomplish these goals while ensuring transparency. Information about city spending and programs, the results of audits, and all of the office's reports must be publically available. That's how we ensure integrity in our city spending and its operations. This City belongs to the people; not to the politicians, Wall Street or special interests. The people of New York deserve to know how their money is spent.

20. Do you believe there needs to be improvements to the Comptroller's role and practices? What changes would you make to the structure or functions of the office?

The core functions of the comptroller's office are integral to the health and well-being of this city, but the office can do more to protect New Yorkers. We can leverage our agencies' purchasing power and the size of our pension funds to make sure that the companies we hire and in which we invest are serving all of our interests.

The comptroller's office touches every aspect of city government. It has a role to play in ensuring that our educational programs prepare our children for higher education and the workforce, that the City's infrastructure can support us for generations to come, and the City is developed in a sustainable manner that supports growth while maintaining the integrity of our neighborhoods.

21. What would you propose to increase the transparency of the Board of Elections in the City of New York's operations and accountability to the city and its voters?

The Board of Elections has had countless problems over the years. It's an embarrassment that despite the attention paid to voting and voting rights all over the country, our Board of Elections in New York City can't even elect an Executive Director and begin to fix the multitude of issues we have with voting in this city. Without leadership and accountability, the Board of Elections cannot ensure the full participation of our voters.

As Comptroller, I would conduct a full review of the Board, highlighting ways in which we can increase voter participation in this city.

22. What would you propose to further enhance transparency of the pension funds and city spending? How would you create greater disclosure around city-affiliated non-profits that are increasingly supplementing the work of city agencies?

Transparency in the comptroller's office is an absolute imperative. The comptroller's website should contain a comprehensive and frequently updated list of all firms retained to manage our pension funds.

As governor, I negotiated with the state legislature to reform the member item process in Albany, requiring that member items be laid out clearly before the legislature could vote on a spending plan. New York City needs member item reform as well. The system of allowing the city council speaker sole discretion to award member items should be abolished in favor of an approach based on legitimate community needs, and all member items, discretionary funds, and city-affiliated non-profits should have to disclose information about their funding, expenditures, and activities.

23. What would you propose to address some of the structural imbalances in the current budget process?

We need to take a more conservative view of the five-year financial plan revenue projections and, at the same time, seriously grapple with ever increasing fixed costs. It is imperative that we find ways to reign in what the Citizens' Budget Commission refers to as "legacy costs" -- namely pension contributions, retiree health benefits, and debt service.

Together, the CBC estimates that these costs will consume 24% of operating expenses by 2015. Going forward, we need to take a hard look at employee contributions towards both their future retirement and current and future healthcare costs. While interest rates remain low, we also need to look towards greater opportunities for refinancing our debt while directing a larger share of future capital spending to pay as you go. Finally, at least in principle, we should try to tie the rate of City spending increases to local area inflation.

24. What is your view of how the taxes paid by New Yorkers compare to the value that is received in City services? Do you believe that taxes should be raised or lowered? To the extent you believe taxes should be changed, please provide specific proposals about what taxes you would change and what services you would cut, if you didn't raise taxes, listed in order of greatest magnitude.

We need to make sure that our taxation system is progressive and that the rules are clear. New York has become so expensive that it's nearly impossible for working and middle class families to live and work here. New York shouldn't be a city just for the well to do. Our city services should serve all New Yorkers and our tax code should reflect that.

25. In FY 2012-13, New York City spent \$13.649 billion on pensions and fringe benefits for City employees out of a total net budget of \$68.7 billion. What would you do to address the growing pension and health care costs borne by the city and New York City tax payers?

Pension liabilities and rising health care costs are plaguing cities throughout the country. For too long, we've made unreasonable assumptions about our investment returns and health care. We need objective, realistic, and honest analysis about the state of our pension liabilities so that we can make better informed decisions about investments, and about benefits for today's retirees and tomorrow's workers.

26. Many policy advocates champion the creation of a more diversified economy, and one that is less reliant on Wall Street. What is your position on such a plan? If you support it, what would you do to diversify the city's economy? How would you adjust spending in New York City to accommodate the anticipated reduction in tax revenue as the tax base shifts to lower paying jobs?

Our city economy should be as diverse as possible, and we've been moving in that direction with the development of Silicon Alley and other industries in New York. But we need to develop our "creative class" and do more to encourage new industries to come here and to prepare our workforce for these jobs. Whether it's the healthcare industry or green technologies, there's no reason New York can't have a diverse economy that supports a variety of well-paying jobs.

**Additional Comments:**



## 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 use the power of the comptroller's office to ensure that the companies in which we invest operate responsibly to the benefit of both their shareholders and the larger public.
2. I will push to reform the City Council member item process and create a need-based system for discretionary spending.
3. I will increase the participation of MWBE investment firms and underwriters.
4. I will audit NYCHA to ensure that it uses all of its resources to keep residents safe and living in dignified housing.
5. Overall, I will make greater use of both financial and performance audits to help structurally reform City agencies so vital services can be delivered both more effectively and efficiently.

**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.**