

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: Costa Constantinides Age: 38

Campaign Address: 41-05 Newtown Road, Astoria, NY 11103

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 896-5992 Fax: none

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic, Working Families

Campaign Manager Name: Nick Roloson

Website & Email: www.votecosta.com, costa4astoria@gmail.com

Education: NYC Public Schools (PS 84, 122, Bryant High School), Queens College, Cardozo School of Law

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Deputy Chief of Staff, Council Member James F. Gennaro

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Democratic District Leader, 36th Assembly District Part A; Executive Board Member, United Community Civic Association; Vice President, Long Island City Alliance; President, Queens County Young Democrats

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

Signature of Candidate: Costa Constantinides Date: 9/30/2013

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?	Oppose
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)	Support
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? (Int. No. 721)	Support
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)?	Support
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?	Support
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)	Support
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?	Support
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)	Support

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

9. What is your position on eliminating matching funds for contributions bundled by lobbying organizations or lobbyists?	Support
10. What is your position on banning placement agents from bundling contributions for any elected official who influences the selection of pension investors?	Support
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?	Unsure

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?	Support
13. What is your position on the following proposals enabling Council committees to function more effectively and independently of the speaker :	
1. Should committee chairs have the ability to hire at least one committee staffer?	Support
1. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	Support
1. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	Support
1. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	Support
14. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	Support
15. What is your position on limiting stipends or "lulus" to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	Support
16. When the Quadrennial Compensation Commission is reconvened, what is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation only	Support

apply prospectively to the following term?	
17. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	Support
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?	Support

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?	Support
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?	Support
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?	Support
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?	Support
23. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	Support

BUDGET REFORM

24. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	Support
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	Support

c. the public advocate ?	Support
d. community boards?	Support
25. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	Support
26. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	Support

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)	Support
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?	Support

Additional Comments:

For me, this campaign has always been about helping people find their voice in government. This is something that can take many forms: over the course of this campaign, for example, I made sure to knock on doors all over the neighborhood, and cover as many different Election Districts as possible. People were impressed to have the candidate themselves suddenly on their doorstep, and often took advantage of the opportunity and told me what their concerns were about our community. These kinds of interactions are integral to a functional democracy, and it's something that I want to continue doing even as a Council Member.

There's a lot we must do purely on the government side, as well. We definitely need to reform the way that Council discretionary funds are distributed. While I'm not convinced that the current framework for discretionary funding needs to be completely abolished there is a real need for more transparency. Our constituents should not be punished for behind-the-scenes political disagreements, and I will work to ensure that that no longer happens. I also found the way that the

previous Council voted itself an extra term reprehensible, and I was very proud to have worked for a member who voted against it. Should such a naked power grab ever appear before the Council again, I would be the first to stand against it.

Finally, in light of the next section of this questionnaire, I think that priorities is a much more appropriate term than “campaign promises.” I’ve got several priorities that I plan on getting to work on starting Day One. The only two promises I’m going to make, however, are these: I’ll never lie to you, and I’ll never stop working for you.

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. **Expansion/Support of Mount Sinai** - Queens has been battered by the closing of four different hospitals over the last four years. A situation where a growing population has to make do with fewer and fewer hospitals is unacceptable, so I have long been a supporter of the expansion of Mount Sinai Hospital in Astoria. This hospital is already straining to meet the growing demand of the neighborhood, and residents of western Queens should not have to go over a bridge to get decent health care. Thankfully, the expansion project will be moving forward very soon, and I am proud to have been part of the coalition that has pressured the state bureaucracy into responding to the needs of the community.
2. **Get Kids Out of Trailers** - I’m a resident of School District 30, and for far too long too many of our students have been forced to learn in trailers. We were told that these trailers would be temporary, yet some of them have been there for over 10 years! That some students have seen their entire grade school tenure go by with the notion that it’s somehow normal to be sent out to learn in a trailer is inexcusable, and while I think Mayor Bloomberg’s intentions in creating the 2030 plan were good, it’s time we talk about 2013 plan. We need a boost in infrastructure investment now to meet the educational needs of the next generation.
3. **Fight for a More Community-Oriented DOE, and Ensure it’s Headed by an Educator** - We need to reevaluate the direction this administration has taken us. We saw, in the Cathie

Black fiasco, exactly what we had always feared - this administration's educational policy was about imposing business ideology on one of the cornerstones of our democratic system. In spite of this embarrassment, however, the administration has continued to impose upon our neighborhood. Last year we fought the attempted closings of Bryant and Long Island City High Schools, and this year we had to fight an attempt to eviscerate one of the city's best Gifted and Talented programs at PS122. We need an educational policy that does not attempt to hand down by fiat attempts to re-engineer our school system based on a business model and that really listens to community input rather than just paying it lip service.

4. **Better Air/Water Quality** - Western Queens and Astoria in particular have suffered greatly as a result of the air pollution from a number of sources. Recently, the City's Community Air Survey showed higher than average concentrations of several major pollutants all throughout the district, emanating from our buildings, the highways, and our power plants. This has a serious impact on the health and well-being of our residents, including increased asthma rates and other respiratory problems. I will fight to make sure that western Queens no longer has to bear the burden of dirty and harmful power plants. While it's encouraging that the Poletti plant is finally being dismantled we must be vigilant with the remaining plants as well. The Council has also made great strides in regulating the dirty heating oil that buildings use and the diesel fuel that powers our school buses, but I will fight to protect and strengthen these standards. Whether the issue is hydrofracking, air pollution, or encouragement of clean, sustainable technology, I pledge to be a tireless advocate for the environment and for the health of our fellow New Yorkers.

5. **Protecting and Expanding Greenspace** - Astoria Park is a great park that serves as a breathing space for our neighborhood, but I hope to see it become more. I support Peter Vallone's efforts to transform the old diving pool into a theater that will bring more people to the park. I've also been a long supporter of the Astoria Park Alliance and GreenshoresNYC and look forward to working with them as a Councilmember to improve conditions in and around the park. Finally, as great as Astoria Park is, it is not convenient to many of the families of the neighborhood. Thanks to the efforts of community activists led by Councilmember Daniel Dromm, Jackson Heights was able to acquire new land for a park. Should any opportunities like that arise in my district, I plan to follow in those footsteps. I intend to ask the DEP, for example, to conduct a feasibility study to see if Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Facility can be capped and used as parkland, much in the same way that Manhattan's Riverbank State Park was.

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