



Candidate Questionnaire  
Local Candidates Committee  
New York City Council Elections 2017

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York City and our interest in reforming city and state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than June 28<sup>th</sup>.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York City Council, and to issue our preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election. Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. **Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.**

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

**Biographical Information**

Candidate Name: Felix Ortiz

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Age: 57

Education: Boricua College, B.A. N.Y.U. M.P.A.

Office Sought (including district): 38th Council District, City Council

Occupation/Employer: Member of the Assembly 1995 to the present. Elected 1994. 51st Assembly District. Chaired several committees and is now Deputy Speaker.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:  
Democratic State Committeeman, District Leader, Member, Community Board Seven, Chair, Public Safety Committee. US Army 1986-1988.

*(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)*

**Campaign Contact Information**

Campaign Manager Name: Mary Jo Ehrlich Additional Staff Contact:

Address: Felix Ortiz For City Council, 475 41st Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11232.

Telephone: 518 331-4571 Fax:

Website: Email: citycouncilrace@gmail.com

Twitter: Facebook:

**Affirmations**

Have you completed required campaign finance filings?  YES  NO

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

*(Please note: interviews are prerequisites of being considered for Citizens Union endorsements.)*

Signature of Candidate:

Date:

I. POLICY QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures, and feel free to 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?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose
4. 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?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose
5. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

6. 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?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose
7. What is your position on increasing the Campaign Finance Board's public matching grants from a partial match of 55% to a full match of funds raised (Int. 1130-A)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Oppose

~~Support~~ ~~Oppose~~  
 yes - I support

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

8. How do you feel the reformed bill drafting process is going under the enacted 2014 Council Rules Reforms and do you think we need a more independent process similar to New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?

I support creating an Independent Bill Drafting Commission for the City Council, similar to the State Legislature's Commission.

9. 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?	Support / Oppose
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	Support / Oppose
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	Support / Oppose
d. Now that committee chair stipends have been eliminated what is your position on reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	Support / Oppose
10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	Support / Oppose
11. 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?	Support / Oppose
12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	Support / Oppose
13. 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 / Oppose
14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms?	Support / Oppose
15. What is your position on making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of Speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense?	Support / Oppose

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT**

16. 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 / Oppose
17. 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 / Oppose
18. 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 / Oppose
19. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	Support / Oppose
20. What is your position on requiring the Police Commissioner to explain divergence from NYPD trial judge and CCRB disciplinary recommendations and to make the explanation public?	Support / Oppose
21. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?	Support / Oppose

22. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?

Support / Oppose

**BUDGET REFORM**

23. 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

24. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining and limiting units of appropriation?

Support / Oppose

25. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?

Support / Oppose

\* - In the event of a fiscal emergency, their budgets could be reduced proportionately in a manner similar to the rest of the City budget.

**LAND USE AND COMMUNITY BOARD REFORM**

26. What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough president's report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments?

Support / Oppose

27. 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 / Oppose

**CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

28. In November, voters in New York will be asked whether they wish to hold a constitutional convention to amend the New York State Constitution. What is your position on holding such a convention?

Support / Oppose

29. If you support the constitutional convention, what actions, if any, will you take to ensure that it takes place? If you oppose the convention, what will you do to defeat it?

29.- Oppose. I will explain my views to my constituents and the public, Basically I am concerned that the delegate selection process (3 per Senate district) would produce a conservative majority at the convention and the submission of radical right-wing proposals to the voters like abortion restrictions, pension reductions, etc. I believe a much better process for enacting progressive legislation, including anti-corruption reforms, is by changing the State Senate. The legislature can also submit changes to the Constitution on the ballot, such as the one on right now, permitting a pension reduction for corrupt public officers.

30. Last year, Citizens Union helped craft and push for the enactment of a law that placed political contribution limits and disclosure requirements on nonprofits that are formed by, or affiliated with, elected officials, which helped prevent some significant features of an emerging "pay-to-play" culture in New York City. Do you have any other ideas to further limit such a culture and create a better environment where contributions, either personal or political do not unduly influence the actions of elected officials?

One commitment I have is to separate my designations of discretionary grants from the budget from any "pay to play" politics. I do not solicit campaign contributions from board members of not-for-profits to whom I designate funds. I also do not ask them or their staffs to volunteer in my campaigns.

I strongly support public financing of elections and have been the lead sponsor of "Clean Elections" public financing, as well as a supporter of abolishing the LLC loophole and other campaign finance reforms. I also strongly support voting reforms like same-day registration, early voting, no-excuse absentee voting (mail voting) and others. Some of those are changes from the legislature, to be sure.

Please use the space provided or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the issues contained in the previous pages. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

As you can see, I strongly support empowering committee chairs to function independently of the Speaker with powers such as the right to issue subpoenas and hire staff.

I also strongly support greater transparency and disclosure in relation to City Council discretionary items.

Campaign contributions should be disclosed from individuals on boards of groups getting money. City conflict-of-interest filings every <sup>year</sup> should contain campaign finance reports submitted simultaneously.

## II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, what are 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.

Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient, and to affix additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements. We thank you very much for your response.

### TOP FIVE 2017 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. *We just began our campaign and can provide you other materials later in the summer.*  
*PROMISE 1: A Full-time public servant providing honest and dedicated community service.*
2. *Intense efforts to improve public services like education and health care and transportation. Efforts also include helping public housing residents in Red Hook. Add more after-school and adult education through 24/7 schools.*
3. *Continue to increase job opportunities on the waterfront and add open space. Force greater accountability for job development from City and State agencies in relation to the waterfront. Sunset Park and Red Hook have giant waterfront areas.*
4. *Continue adding affordable housing in Sunset Park and Red Hook, especially through not-for-profit organizations. Maximize protections for in-place rent stabilized tenants and Section 8 tenants.*
5. *Fair and sensitive representation to the diverse communities of the 38th Council district.*

### III. ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENTS

Citizens Union believes that all New Yorkers deserve to be represented by officials who work for the public interest and honor public trust. With the corruption conviction of recent state legislative leaders, we seek to endorse a candidate who will demonstrate that she/he will honor the full commitment of the oath of office, and will always represent the public interest above all else.

Please tell us how you have and would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner, and restore the public trust in your district.

I have been in office for 23 years and I believe my constituents know me and trust me to conduct the representation of the district honestly and fairly. As I previously indicated, I do not solicit campaign contributions from groups or board members receiving discretionary funds, nor do I ask them to volunteer to do petitions for me.

I have been full-time in the district throughout my career and will continue. Of course disappointments occur from corruption and I support restricting outside income.

Participatory budgeting should also be transparent. Groups should be informed they can just apply for funds, not be forced to compete for the grants by "outvoting" each other.

Groups should also be informed they can also apply for the funds even if they "lose" the votes.

Groups should be informed the Councilmember has many millions of dollars designated outside the "participatory" budgeting.

Participatory Budget voting should be handled by a nonpartisan group, not the Councilmembers' staff.

~~Records the names~~ Email and twitter account personal information should not be collected by the Council members' staff. Instead, a nonpartisan group should collect and publish any records of voting.

Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee, 299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007  
Via email to [candidates@citizensunion.org](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org) or fax to 212.227.0345 • Call us at 212-227-0342 with questions.