



## 2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE - VACANCIES

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State and our interest in reforming state government. 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 our "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 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: Jason A. Otaño Age: 34

Campaign Address: 11 Meserole Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206

Campaign Telephone Number: (917) 566 - 7542 Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation(s): Dem / WFP Campaign Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Website & Email: JasonOtano.com / [Jay@JasonOtano.com](mailto:Jay@JasonOtano.com)

Education: **BA – Fordham University – Latin American/Latino Studies & Political Science, Concentration in Peace and Justice Studies; JD – Fordham Law.**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Solo Practice Attorney

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Former General Counsel for Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz; Candidate for New York State Senate – 18 District (Citizen's Union Preferred Candidate); Community Board 1, Member – Chair, Economic Development Committee; Board President – Best of Brooklyn, Inc.; Board Member – El Puente de Williamsburg; Advisory Board Member – Brooklyn Legal Services Corp. A; Advisory Board member – Churches United for Fair Housing; Member – Puerto Rican Bar Association.

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? **YES**  
(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? **YES**

Signature of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: July 15, 2013

## 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. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about any of the reform measures below.

### ELECTION REFORM

1. What is your position on the recently passed constitutional amendment (S.2107/A.2086 of 2013) creating an independent redistricting commission with appointees split evenly between the majority and minority parties which will be on the ballot in 2014?	<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 two-party system of governance and operation?	<b>Support</b>
3. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by, for example, 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?	<b>Support</b>
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day 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 as proposed by A.689-A of 2013?	<b>Support</b>
9. What is your position on redesigning the ballot to ensure that voters are able to clearly read candidates’ names, titles of offices, designations and ballot questions; that instructions are clear and accurate; that bilingual ballots are required, as proposed by A.204-A of 2013?	<b>Support</b>
10. What is your position on reforming the special election process, creating a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by A.5290/S.161 of 2013?	<b>Support</b>
11. 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 automatically updated?	<b>Support</b>
12. What is your position on eliminating the runoff election in New York City for citywide elections, and instead utilizing Instant Runoff Voting, as proposed by A.7013 of 2013?	<b>Support</b>

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

13. What is your position on establishing a public matching 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>
16. What is your position on limiting or banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would be able to form separate political action committees due to constitutional issues regarding freedom of speech.)	<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 and linking expenditures to candidates targeted?	<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?	<b>Support</b>
23. What is your position on creating an enforcement entity independent of the State Board of Elections to oversee campaign finance laws?	<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>Support</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, building on the 2011 ethics reforms which only apply to future state employees?	<b>Oppose</b>
28. What is your position regarding changing the voting structure and procedures of the Joint Commission on Public Ethics to remove the ability of a superminority of three commissioners from blocking investigations from proceeding, and requiring further transparency of commission votes and the names of persons who are the subject of substantial basis reports?	<b>Support</b>

**BUDGET REFORM**

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 distributing member item allocations equally among all legislators and requiring for greater accountability, as expressed in A.641/S.920 of 2013?	<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>None</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 with existing law or proposed changes in separate legislation?	<b>Support</b>

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.

**I would like to take this opportunity to clarify my position on question 27, in that I am generally wary of any talk of rolling back anything when it comes to pensions. My support for such a bill would depend on what exactly the amendment language looks like and would have set forth a generally narrow scope of felonies directly related to their conduct in office of related to their official duties.**

## **II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS**

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing your top five campaign promises or goals you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position.

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises or goals 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 2012 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS**

1. **Expansion and strengthening of Rent Regulations.**
2. **Champion for more resources to our school, parents and teachers.**
3. **Promote an economic development policy for the creation of real jobs in the district.**
4. **Unveil plans and promote the creation of a Latino cultural district in the Southside of Williamsburg.**
5. **Fortify resources for our NYCHA residents and protect resources in the development.**

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.