



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: Austin Shafran

Age: 33

Campaign Address: 213-33 39th Ave Suite 236 Bayside Queens, NY 11361

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 224-4867 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Gabrielle Guilmart

Website & Email: www.Austin4Council.com; austin4council@gmail.com;
austinshafran@gmail.com

Education: **P.S. 169; I.S. 25; St. Francis Prep High School; and Queens College, CUNY (Bachelor's Degree – Graduated Magna cum Laude)**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office):
Full-time candidate for NYC Council (CD-19)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:
Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Empire State Development, Vice President of Public Affairs; New York State Senate Democratic Conference, Press Secretary; New York State Senate Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, Press Secretary and Chief Media Strategist; Office of New York City Councilman David Weprin, Director of Communications; Office of Congressman Gary L. Ackerman, Special Assistant for Community Affairs; Democratic District Leader (A.D.25)

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? **YES**

(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

Signature of Candidate: _____

Date: **7/08/13**

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?	Support
1. 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
1. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? (Int. No. 721)	Support
1. 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
1. 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
1. 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
1. 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

<p>1. 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)</p>	<p>Support</p>
--	----------------

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

1. 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
1. 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
a. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	Support
a. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	Support
a. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	Support

1. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	Support
1. What is your position on limiting stipends or "lulus" to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	Support
1. 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
1. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	Support.
1. 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

1. What is your position on reducing the frequency of stop, question and frisks by conducting stops more judiciously?	I Support <u>ending</u> Stop, Question & Frisk
1. 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
1. 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

1. 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
1. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	Support

BUDGET REFORM

1. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	Support
a. Conflicts of Interest Board?	Support
a. the public advocate ?	Support
a. community boards?	Support
1. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	Support
1. 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

1. 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
1. 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:

Government reform has been and will continue to be a central focus of my campaign for city council because a better governing process leads to a better government that's more responsive and effective. To give New Yorkers the more honest, transparent, and accountable government they deserve, the City Council must make immediate and long-term reforms that will fight corruption, stop the overwhelming influence of outside business interests, and bring greater equity and objectivity to the tools of representation, including the process for drafting and passing legislation, and the funding of local and citywide projects.

Following the seemingly endless epidemic of public corruption scandals, I have announced a three-point "**Clean up the Council**" reform plan (pasted below) which seeks to eliminate the potential for conflicts of interest from outside business, bring equality and community input to local project funding, and end the inordinate influence corporate lobbyists hold over family members who are elected to public office and favored politicians.

Our communities deserve fair and equal access to city resources as well as an unrestricted opportunity to have legislation that affects them debated and voted on in an open and thorough process. That means decentralizing powers that have typically been under the sole authority of the Speaker, and making the entire legislative process more transparent and equitable so every Council member has an equal ability to provide resources to serve his or her constituents and has access to an independent process to draft legislation and have it debated and voted on in an open and honest manner based on the merits without dictatorial control hindering the democratic process.

In addition to announcing a three-point reform plan, I am also the first and only candidate to publicly release his financial disclosure statement, which all candidates are required to submit to the Conflicts of Interest Board and NYC Campaign Finance Board. To bring greater transparency and accountability to the electoral process, I have called on all candidates to do the same and pull back the veil of secrecy that blocks voters from seeing where a candidate's personal finances are coming from.

My full, un-redacted COIB financial disclosure statement can be viewed at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/152493737/Austin-Shafran-Annual-Disclosure-Report-Filing-for-Calendar-Year-2012-New-York-City-Conflicts-of-Interest-Board-UNREDACTED>.

AUSTIN SHAFRAN'S CLEAN UP THE COUNCIL PLAN

I. Ban ALL outside employment and income for Council Members to end conflicts of interest.

Justification:

- Prohibiting Council Members from engaging in employment outside of their governmental duties will help root out the corrupting influence of outside business interests.
- Our community deserves a Council Member whose only job is to represent us - not his own business clients.

How it Works:

- Make the City Council a full-time position, and prohibit Council Members from engaging in any outside employment from which they derive an income.
- Profits derived from stock/bond investments, personal/family trusts, retirement funds, or through inheritance would not be restricted under this proposal.

II. End political slush funds with equal and fair discretionary funding for all Council Districts.

Justification:

- Funding for local projects should be done through a community-driven process where those who know their area best get a fair say in what projects get funded, and every district gets its fair share.
- The clearly voiced will of the local community should have final say in what projects get funded in their community. It's the taxpayers' money - not some politician's to dole out to politically connected friends or business clients - and that money should go where the local community thinks it works best through an objective process and on an equal basis.

How it Works:

- Equal expense and capital funding for all Council Districts.
- Equality of funding would be determined through formula spending which takes into consideration various categories that account for populations, land area, districts with higher poverty levels, etc.
- Objective review and scoring of all discretionary projects by:
 - A) City Agency Score (33%);
 - B) Participatory Budget Score (33%); and
 - C) Council Member Score (33%).
- Assuming that a "Speaker's Pot" is still available, it should be limited in size, so that it is no more in total than all individual pots combined.

III. Prohibit corporate lobbyists and their firms from lobbying ANY family members who are elected to public office or elected officials they worked for as campaign staff or consultants.

Justification:

- Potential conflicts of interest may arise when lobbyists and their firms have unfair and unfettered access to family members who are elected to public office and elected officials on whose campaigns they worked as staff or consultants.

- Banning lobbyists and their firms from lobbying family members who are elected to public office and favored politicians they helped elect will ensure a level playing field for all and will finally take the “it’s who-you-know” out of government.
- Whether you are a local community resident, business, or non-profit service provider, merit and fairness, not favoritism and family, should guide funding and policy decisions made by our elected officials that affect our city.

How it Works:

- This proposal would ban City-registered corporate lobbyists and their firms from lobbying family members who are elected to public office and elected officials they worked for as campaign staff or consultants for the duration of the term immediately following the most recent election cycle.
- Limit unfair access often enjoyed by politically connected corporate lobbyists by establishing a firewall between those lobbyists and family members who are elected to public office and elected officials on whose campaigns they worked.
- Lobbying on behalf of non-profit and labor organizations would not be subject to these restrictions.
- Disclosure requirements for all lobbyists and their firms would include the listing of family members who are elected to public office in City government and any candidates they worked for as campaign staff or consultants who are now serving as elected officials.

###

I have also attached the plan to this email for your consideration. And here is a link from the Queens Courier that highlights the announcement of my plan:

<http://queenscourier.com/2013/district-19-candidate-shafran-wants-to-clean-up-city-council/>

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. Stopping pay-to-play corruption and ensuring that council members are working ONLY for the interests of their communities.
2. Increasing community input in our public education system.
3. Protecting services and stopping cuts for our seniors.
4. Working with local, small businesses to help lower their taxes and create more jobs.
5. Bringing more reliable and affordable public transportation to Northeast Queens.

**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.**