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**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
ELECTION 2009**

Citizens Union would appreciate your responses to the following questions related to policy issues facing the City of New York that are of concern to Citizens Union and the citizens 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. In order to receive Citizens Union's "preferred" or "endorsed" status, in addition to completing the questionnaire, candidates must participate in an interview with Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee.

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: OSCAR FRANCISCO ZORRILLA Age: 41

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 15

Campaign Address: 2421 BEAUMONT AV. BRONX NY 10458

Campaign Telephone Number: (917) 500-0484 Fax: (718) 684-1107

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: self

Website & Email: WWW.OSCARZORRILLA.COM / OSCARFZORRILLA@GMAIL

Education: AA Degree in Liberal Arts; BA Degree in Communications;  
MS Ed in TESOL CANDIDATE (Skill in progress)

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Independent  
property manager


Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

member of ACLU & NHCLC

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" and "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed. We will make every effort to interview candidates in each race for City Council.)

Signature of Candidate:  Date: 7/17/09

## 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 allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries?   | Support        | <u>Oppose</u> |
| 2. What is your position on passage of state legislation that would allow referenda initiated by the City Council and/or the public to appear on the ballot at the same time as a referendum initiated by a charter commission appointed by the Mayor?  | <u>Support</u> | Oppose        |
| 3. What is your position on increasing the pay of Election Day poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event?   | <u>Support</u> | Oppose        |
| 4. What is your position on restructuring New York's current board of elections model to eliminate political party responsibility for overall election administration and replace it with a system that narrows political party involvement to certification of candidate petitions and the actual counting of votes? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose        |
| 5. What is your position on having an election administration system where there is a local elections executive director appointed by the mayor upon recommendation by a new board that is chosen by the mayor and the city council?  | Support        | <u>Oppose</u> |

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

- |   |         |               |
|---|---------|---------------|
| 6. What is your position on implementing "war chest" restrictions that would prohibit a candidate from transferring funds raised in a previous election cycle into a current campaign committee for a different office? | Support | <u>Oppose</u> |
|---|---------|---------------|

7. What is your position on allowing campaign financing for ballot proposals? Support Oppose

**CITY COUNCIL REFORM**

8. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case? Support ~~Oppose~~

a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? 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

9. What is your position on:

a. limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income? Support Oppose

b. making the job of councilmember a full-time position? Support Oppose

c. eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? Support Oppose

10. What is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation not affect those serving in the current term of the council and only be applied prospectively to the following term? Support Oppose AS LONG AS T MEMBER'S POW IS NOT CENTRAL

11. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees? Support Oppose

12. What is your position on term limits for elected officials? Support Oppose

13. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that changes to term limits may only be approved by the voters? Support Oppose

14. What is your position on the recent extension of term limits for the city's elected officials to three consecutive four-year terms? Please explain your answer.

Support

Oppose

*Ballot proposals gather or collect the people's will. Therefore, it must be honored. If the people vote to limit the elected official terms, no politician should disrespect and insult the people's will by amending it. These changes must take place only by another referendum. The people that chose it must be the only one authorized to undo it.*

POLICY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Please state your position on the following issues by indicating whether you support or oppose each, where applicable. Please also use the space provided below each question or on a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the questions which require a detailed answer. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

15. Knowing that the police department and commissioner retain ultimate authority for determining whether an officer is guilty and penalty, what is your position on transferring power to the Civilian Complaint Review Board to prosecute cases of police misconduct, such as force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and offensive language?

Support

Oppose

*I believe that no police officer with 25 or more complaints, filed within one year with the CCRB should be entitled to any salary increase. Also, a regular citizen jury must be the ones who decide whether an officer is guilty.*

16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning?

Support

Oppose

17. What is your position regarding the creation of a Charter Revision Commission to review specifically the roles of the various offices of government and how well government has functioned since the 1988 and 1989 charter review commissions?

Support

Oppose

*As long as the decision to revise it as well as its members are chosen by referendum and election, respectively.*

18. What is your position on reforming the current pension funding structure to create multiple tiers for future city government employees?

Support

Oppose

transferring funds raised in a previous election cycle into a current campaign committee for a different office?

- a. In FY 2008-09, New York City spent \$12 billion on pensions and fringe benefits for City employees out of a total budget of \$62 billion. What would you do to address the growing pension costs borne by the city and New York City tax payers?

*I would legislate to reduce the cost of such pensions (paid by city employees) and to increase the benefits.*

19. What is your position with respect to the City Council passing a resolution calling upon the State Legislature to establish a State Constitutional Convention? Support Oppose

- a. If support, what are the three most important areas that need improvement?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Do you believe that greater home rule should be granted to the City of New York? If so, in what areas should further sovereignty be given?

*First, in the <sup>NYC</sup> Department of Education I believe the city, not the mayor, should have more control over this entity. Second, the MTA NYC Transit services are mainly in the NYC area. Thus NYC officials and MTA unions should have their fair share of control in this area. Finally, the Board of Elections, at municipal level, should be regulated by the city, not by the state.*

- 20. Taking into consideration the lessons learned from the debates surrounding congestion pricing and the Ravitch Commission's recommendations to provide the MTA with long-term funding, what would you propose to address the MTA's fiscal solvency issues and ensure that the burden for funding the MTA is equitably distributed among all stakeholders?

*I believe that some MTA top salaries (such as the chairman's and other executives) must be lowered or the city tax they pay ~~must~~ should be increased in order to fund the MTA fairly. Any body <sup>in MTA</sup> who earns over \$120,000 a year must accept a slight salary reduction.*

21. What would you propose in terms of creating a greater role for the city council in determining and deciding the city budget?

*It would be great as the balancing of the budget will be more democratic.*

22. What is your position regarding the City's past practice of using surplus tax revenues to pay down future health cost and pension obligations, and the decision not to do so this year?

*It is a smart initiative. However, it must continue to be done every single year, not one or two, as long as there is a surplus.*

23. 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 raise and what services you would cut, if you didn't raise taxes, listed in order of greatest magnitude.

*I feel that New Yorkers in the City are paying too much in sales tax and real estate property taxes. The only City tax I would raise would be the City income tax to all tax payers who earn \$50,000 or more annually. I would increase the health care services offered by HHC, the schools ~~day care~~ <sup>day care</sup> facilities and ~~the~~ would change the criteria to have more parents qualify for these services. Of course, it would be given the circumstances in which the City of NY would have more power ~~of~~ over the NYC DOE.*

24. 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?

I ~~would~~ would strongly fight to increase the municipal income tax to every individual in the city who earns \$250,000 a year or more. I would legislate to use ~~this~~ this extra <sup>city</sup> income to create high-paying jobs either directly or by promoting a tax relive to large corporations who opt for paying better salaries and offering more fair benefits to their workers.

25. What would you propose the Department of Education do to increase the ability for parents and teachers to become more meaningfully involved in the education system? What other positives changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

I would offer (via a new legislation) parents who prove their active involvements better services provided by the NYC DOE, such as a reduction on the student's metro cards, lunch fees and after school programs. These costs may lower in grade scales up to going down to 0 in the case of those exceptionally compliant parents.

26. 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?

I would offer more training online, over the phone (by an extensive records system) and written. I must be extremely specific with all types of scenarios used to illustrate the rules and regulations of these entities.

27. What would you propose to further enhance transparency regarding the relationships between council members, their families, and nonprofits that receive funding from New York City?

I insist on more informative trainings, especially by the Board of Elections. Currently, its too hermetic and does not answer any question on the topic of running for a NYC office.



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**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 2009 CAMPAIGN PROMISES**

1. 1) Increase of City income tax to the wealthy.
2. 2) To reduce or eliminate police abuse of authority.
3. 3) To double ~~of~~ triple the penalty for convicts of racial-hate crimes.
4. 4) To ban politicians' right to amend ballot proposals.
5. 5) To end the classist system used by the NYC DOE to maintain all the students from low income neighborhoods together. This zoning system is nothing but a modern way of segregating students based on their parents' financial conditions.