



**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: **Pete Gleason** Age: **46**

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: **Council District #: 1 – Lower Manhattan**

Campaign Address: **131 Varick St., Suite 906, New York, NY 10013**

Campaign Telephone Number: **646- 872- 3546**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democratic** Campaign Manager Name: **Jeanne K. Wilcke**

Website & Email: **www.Pete2009.com, rednyc@mac.com**

Education: **JD, CUNY School of Law, 2000. BS, SUNY Empire State College, 1993.**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): **Attorney/Candidate**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Environmental & Civil Rights Attorney, Levine and Gilbert. Firefighter, FDNY.

Police Officer, NYPD. Retired Lieutenant, United States Coast Guard.

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

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

(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:

7/31/09



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Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

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 |
| 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? | Support |
| 3. What is your position on increasing the pay of Election Day poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event? | Support |
| 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? | Support |
| 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 |

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 |
|---|---------|

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

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
- a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? Support
- b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? Support
- c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? Support
9. What is your position on:
- a. Limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income? Support
- b. Making the job of councilmember a full-time position? Support
- c. Eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? Support
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
11. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees? Support
12. What is your position on term limits for elected officials? Support
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

14. What is your position on

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

I was party to the recent federal litigation seeking to hold the City Council's actions unconstitutional. The Mayor and City Council's arrogant dismissive of the clearly expressed wishes of the voters was an insult to the democratic process.

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

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

- 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

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

- 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 support and will fight for a universal single payer health care system that will reduce costs for all employers, private and public.**
- **The City should offer municipal employees incentives and options to opt out of or choose pension and other benefit plans.**

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

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

- **Home rule for NYC and other localities.**
- **A clear replacement mechanism for the Lt. Governor.**
- **Legislative rules reform along the lines of those proposed by the Brennan Center Report.**

- 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?

Yes. Some key areas for home rule legislation are education, housing and rent regulation, land-use policy, transportation, and revenue development.

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?

- **Require thorough legislative oversight of the MTA and other public authorities, including publishing MTA books online.**
- **Reinstate the commuter tax.**

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

Budget Legislation should originate in the City Council, and the negotiations and mark-up sessions should be held in public.

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?

While I support this practice in general, FY 2010 was crafted in such a difficult fiscal environment that I believe skipping this otherwise prudent action was justified.

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.

In this time of fiscal crisis, it is essential that high income New Yorkers step up to the plate to ensure the continued economic vitality of the city in which they have thrived. At the same time, massive subsidies to large corporations, big developers and sports franchises should be curbed if not eliminated.

Meanwhile, the tax burden on families earning less than \$250,000 and small businesses must be eased as much as possible.

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?

- **Support zoning that encourages economic and cultural diversity, including light industry.**
- **Enhance Small Business Services incentive programs.**
- **Convert surplus office capacity in Lower Manhattan (the district I am running to represent) to schools and real affordable housing.**

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?

Each district should have a parental/teacher ombudsman that will lend to transparency and prevent retaliation. Having spoken to hundreds of parents and teachers, the present system is intentionally set up to silence any criticism of the department. This is unacceptable and must change..

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?

Unfortunately our system of elections is set up to dissuade people from voting. Many New Yorkers are apathetic when it comes to participating in our election process. Newly hired Board of Elections employees should be done through civil service testing rather than appointments.

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?

The Speaker must be held ultimately accountable for misappropriation of funds. While so called "member-items" have a role, all councilmembers should have an equal amount of funds to distribute, or pro rata subject to an ongoing formula taking into account permanent and transient population, social services, cultural services, etc., and all grants should be run through an ethics and viability vetting process.

Additional Comments: See website [Pete 2009.com](http://Pete2009.com).



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. **Transparency in government (i.e., council hearings on the slush fund scandal)**
2. **Sign a binding document only to serve 2 full terms.**
3. **Lower my Council salary to \$69,000.**
4. **Hold Administrative Agencies responsible to those they serve.**
5. **Make decisions based on representing my district without regard to my political future.**