



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: Evergreen C. Chou Age: 48

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 20

Campaign Address: 41-34 Frame Pl. #5K

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 961-1515 Fax: (718) 961-1515

Party Affiliation(s): Green Campaign Manager Name: Paystar Chou

Website & Email: www.myspace.com/evergreen_chou ; evergreen888@gmail.com

Education: Bachelor of Science

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Ultrasound Technician

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Neighborhood Advisory Board #7

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES [checked] NO
Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES [checked] 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: Evergreen C. Chou Date: 7-27-09

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 Oppose

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 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? Support 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? Support 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 Oppose

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 Oppose

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

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

The citizens of NY voted 2 times for term limits. The politicians must follow the law of the land.

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

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

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

Support

Oppose

- 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?

Cut administrative cost

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?

1) Housing - look at Urstadt Law
 2) Unions - look at Taylor Law

3) Jobs - create Green Jobs Dept in Dept. of Labor

- 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?

NYC should decide the future of NYC
 Home Rule is necessary for financial stability
 1) Housing 2) Taxes

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?

1) Open the books

2) Reduce top executive pay

3) Reward ridership with lower monthly & weekly passes.

4) Toll on all bridges to generate income and reduce traffic in all boroughs.

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

Power to city council to amend the Budget. Right now the mayor has too much power and the budget is a top down vote.

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?

We should go back to past practice of ensuring stable funding for our health cost or pension obligations.

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.

Progressive taxation: those who are earning more should pay more.

We should bring back commuter tax, stock transfer tax.

We should close major loopholes in corporate taxation.

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?

Increase small business opportunities.
 Instead of a Wall Street we should have a NYC market. A small area vendors selling food, gifts, vegetables. A permanent farmers market run by the City of NY.

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 positive changes can be made to the New York City public school system?

Give PTA more say, give principal more say: let the decision be made from community with principal + teacher input.
 Hire a chancellor from NYC: find someone from the system.

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?

Break the 2 party hold a Board of Election. Allow other party to be appointed to key positions. Hold conventions to get ideas on reform and follow them in plans.

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?

Open disclosure on the internet just like the program run by NYC Campaign Finance Board. Every donation must be listed.