



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: Peter A. Koo Age: 56

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

Campaign Address: 133-31 39th Ave, #F17, Flushing, NY 11354

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 460-3830 Fax: (718) 460-3831

Party Affiliation(s): Republican Campaign Manager Name: Walter Chi

Website & Email: www.PeterKoo.com info@PeterKoo.com

Education:

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

President, Seaside Drugs

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

President, Flushing Chinese Business Association

Member, Community Board 7, Founder and Trustee, LaGuardia Community

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES X NO College

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES X NO Foundation

(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: [Signature] Date: 8/12/09

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Peter J.W. Sherwin, Chair • Dick Dadey, Executive Director

## 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.

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### VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

1. What is your position with respect to allowing voters who are registered as independents to vote in party primaries? **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**
  
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? **Oppose**

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### 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**

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. **Oppose**

*I support term limits and am troubled by the manner in which the Term Limits Law was amended last year. When the people speak in the form of referendum twice, legislators should not, by the stroke of a pen, be allowed to overturn the will of the people. Term limits should have been put to a public vote if the law was to be amended or changed. It sends a poor message to the electorate when they vote for an initiative and their will is overturned by those they have elected to speak on their behalf.*

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### 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? **Oppose**
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**
- 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

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 a proficient, dependable, and safe public transportation system is crucial to the success and operation of New York City's economy and the preservation of our quality of life. The MTA is facing large budget deficit gaps and we must work together on the State and Local level to find new revenue streams, find solutions, and make sacrifices to ensure that no one contributes an excessive amount of the funding to resolve the MTA's financial problems. Before instituting any additional fare increases or bridge tolls, the public trust must be restored. There must be a mechanism in place to provide greater accountability and transparency in the MTA's budget.*

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

*The role of the City Council is miniscule in the budget process. In order for there to be some fairness and equity, there must be a greater role for the City Council in the budgeting process. While the City Council has the ability and authority under the law to adopt its own budget, it is silly in which to do since the Mayor has the sole authority to determine where money is spent. That puts the City Council at an extraordinary disadvantage and renders it mostly ineffective. Council has adopted the role of preserving pork in the budget and agreeing to do a budget dance with the Mayor that has the Mayor reducing essential services only for the Council to restore. Time would be much better spent on two negotiations, elimination of waste and streamlining spending.. Instead of spending 2 months behind closed doors in a "budget process", only determining which political powerful non-for-profit or lobbyist gets City funding, empowering the Council may allow for the growth in which they can take their jobs more seriously.*

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?

*In the past, the City used surplus tax revenue to pay down future health costs and to pay down future pension obligations. In this fiscal year, we are faced with significant budget deficit, a substantial reduction in income from Wall Street and witnessing the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Clearly, given the nature of the economy and the economic climate, it is not reasonable or practical to pay down*

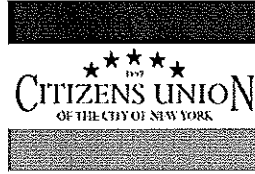
*During my numerous conversations with parents, the most pervasive issue is that they feel that their voices are not being heard. Too often they are consulted after important decisions are already made and in the process of being implemented. Parents should have an active voice in their child's education and important decisions made at the school level and in the Chancellor's office. In addition, I feel that good teachers should be given more latitude in the classroom. I have heard too often that teachers are forced to focus on standardized test preparation or limited by the "workshop" model of teaching in the classroom. Children need innovation, creativity and care when in the classroom. The corporate cookie cutter approach to education should be stopped.*

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 certainly be open to reviewing a comprehensive plan that would restructure the Board of Elections. Clearly, the current system of operation has shown to have many failures and flaws and the partisan nature tends to create unnecessary adversarial system of operation which is not efficient or effective. I also believe the process for hiring inspectors needs to allow and encourage unaffiliated voters.*

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 New York City Council slush fund scandal is cause for great concern and every effort should be made to prevent the use of tax-payer money for personal profit or political gains. To remedy the situation, the Council has adopted new vetting procedures to try to eliminate fraud and prevent abuses. However, more needs to be done to enhance transparency, eliminate fraud, prevent abuses and punish all who violate the public trust.*



## 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

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_