



**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: Gerald Esposito Age: 55

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 34th

Campaign Address: 152 Conselyea St. / Brooklyn, NY 11211

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 928-4198 Fax: ()

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Gary Tilzer

Website & Email: http://www.gerryesposito.com & electesposito@gmail.com

Education: HS, Brooklyn Technical High School; AA, LaGuardia Community College; BS with honors, C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center; M.P.A., John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): District Manager of Community Board #1 (1977-current)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Executive board of Boy Scouts of America Greater New York Council, Board member of Conselyea St. Block Association, 2nd Vice President of PSC Community Services, Advisory board member of Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, President of Seneca Club of Kings County

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

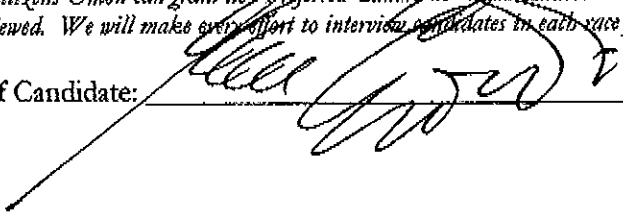
Citizens Union • 299 Broadway New York, NY 10007
phone 212-227-0342 • fax 212-227-0345 • citizens@citizensunion.org • www.citizensunion.org
Peter J.W. Sherwin, Chair • Dick Dadey, Executive Director

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



**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: ___Gerald Esposito_____ Age: ___55___

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: ___34th_____

Campaign Address: ___152 Conselyea St. / Brooklyn, NY 11211

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 928-4198 _____ Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat ___ Campaign Manager Name: ___Gary Tilzer_____

Website & Email: __http://www.gerryesposito.com & electesposito@gmail.com_____

Education: ___HS, Brooklyn Technical High School; AA, LaGuardia Community College; BS with honors, C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center; M.P.A., John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): __District Manager of Community Board #1 (1977-current)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: __Executive board of Boy Scouts of America Greater New York Council, Board member of Conselyea St. Block Association, 2nd Vice President of PSC Community Services, Advisory board member of Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, President of Seneca Club of Kings County

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

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 | <u>Oppose</u> |
|---|---------|---------------|

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

- | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| 8. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| a. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? | Support | <u>Oppose</u> |
| 9. What is your position on: | | |
| a. limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| b. making the job of councilmember a full-time position? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| c. eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| 11. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| 12. What is your position on term limits for elected officials? | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | 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**
-

I am absolutely opposed to the Council’s last term limits vote. It demonstrated a self-serving and flagrant disregard for the will of the people. Lost in the debate last year was the fact that term limits were initially put in place in response to the Parking Violations Bureau scandal during the Koch Administration. The aim of the first term limits referendum in 1993 was to institutionalize a safeguard against the kind of political corruption and cronyism that invariably comes about if elected officials are allowed to stay in office for too long. It is a sad lesson that we once again learned with this current City Council’s slush fund scandal that our elected officials can still not be trusted to choose the public good over their own. The Council didn’t earn a third term, they stole it. It’s going to take a long time for the Council to regain its credibility in the eyes of the people and it’s going to take a lot of exceptional councilmembers with real integrity to win it back. That’s why I’m running for City Council. If eight years isn’t enough time to bring about real change in your community, you’ve failed as a councilmember and you shouldn’t deserve to come back another term.

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?

Both the City and State Comptrollers' Offices have been grossly mismanaged, resulting in the loss of untold millions of dollars of pension money to unethical and possibly criminal investments with private firms intent upon fleecing the pension fund. With our pension fund already in crisis, we can ill afford to squander millions of dollars on cronyism and backroom deals. We need to reform the City Comptroller's office to make sure that there are no conflicts of interest between so-called placement agents, hedge funds, equity firms, and our government officials are allowed to exist. Beyond this imperative first step, we must get health care costs under control by moving to a government-run health care system that doesn't just provide coverage for all New Yorkers, but one that eliminates the exorbitant per procedure costs of medical services currently in place and moves to a global payment system. Lastly, though it is an undesirable solution, we must accept that with more people living longer, we have to seriously consider increasing the retirement age for City employees to save money.

-
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?

Calling a State Constitutional Convention is one of the most inventive ideas that has been proposed to reform our system of governance and one that is sorely needed. The recent crisis in the State Senate has demonstrated that it is not just impractical, but

dangerous for New York City to be subject on so many essential fronts to the chaos in Albany. That's why first and foremost any Constitutional Convention must expand home rule for New York City. The crisis in the State Senate also demonstrated that we need to impose term limits on our state legislators, since clearly that is one of the most immediate ways to shake up the current system and break the impasse in Albany. The third reform we must immediately implement is creating a campaign finance system like New York City's that would cover statewide elections and enable challengers to compete on a level-playing field financially with entrenched incumbents.

- 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?

Greater home rule for New York City is a must. We must be able to free ourselves from the shackles of the Urstadt law, end vacancy decontrol, have the right to pass a great range of taxes without Albany's approval, and decide for ourselves who is going to run our schools.

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?

The only way to truly equitably distribute the costs of the MTA to all its stakeholders is to reclassify our mass transit system as an essential City service, like sanitation, the police, and fire, and cover the costs of the MTA as part of the City income tax. If everyone paid for the MTA and we got rid of the fare system, more drivers would be encouraged to use mass transit, and we would eliminate the regressive penalty imposed upon New York City's poorest residents, for whom the daily cost of riding mass transit is a tremendous burden. We must also ensure that all New Yorkers are receiving equitable mass transit service.

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

Before we can seriously consider a greater role for the City Council in the budget process, we

must reform the City Council internally to eliminate the widespread abuse of the budget powers the Council already possesses. The current slush fund scandal rocking the Council has made it clear that too many of our City Council members are incapable of ethically allocating their member items and the best way to reform the system is likely to eliminate the whole system of discretionary funds all together.

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?

New York City has many great economic hurdles to overcome before we will once again have the luxury of figuring out how best to use our future surpluses. While I am not against paying down health care and pension costs by any means, I want to get us out of deficit first, before I start planning for sunny day scenarios.

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.

It is no secret that New Yorkers get short shrift from the state when it comes to getting proportionate services for the percentage of tax revenue we shoulder. Not only do we need to make sure that the Campaign for Fiscal Equity judgment is properly adhered to by our state government so that our schools can finally get the money they deserve, we need to extend that philosophy of fiscal equity to every area of the state budget. As for taxes, I believe strongly in a progressive tax system where everyone pays their fair share in exchange for the innumerable benefits of living in our city, but we must not be so quick to try to solve all our fiscal woes by continuously raising taxes without ample justification. The city is already hemorrhaging businesses, shoppers, and more affluent New Yorkers, which is eroding our tax base and, as a result, postponing the full brunt of our fiscal crisis for the future, when it will only be more difficult for us to manage. In order to justify tax increases, which are inevitable to some degree, the City needs to demonstrate a new commitment to transparency and fiscal restraint,

so the public can see that the steps the City is taking to balance the budget are necessary and not willy-nilly stop gap solutions thrust onto the backs of hard-working New Yorkers.

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?
-

It was a big and readily foreseeable mistake for New York City to rely upon the boom and bust cycle of Wall Street to buoy our economy. Even if Wall Street rebounds, we must never again be so myopic as to keep all our eggs in that basket. I am an adamant believer in diversifying our economy to expand the City's number of biotech, manufacturing, and green jobs. While these jobs might not offer the multi-million dollar bonuses that Wall Street financiers get, these industries will offer good-paying, stable jobs to more New Yorkers than Wall Street employs, and ultimately make up for the short-term reduction in the City's tax base. Moreover, these jobs will drive New York City's economy into the 21st Century, rather than keeping us dependent upon the meteoric ups and downs of the stock market.

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?
-

Under the current system of mayoral control, parents and teachers have no say in the way that our schools are run, which does a terrible disservice to everyone who depends upon our education system. If we are to retain the Community Education Councils as a vehicle for parental and teacher involvement, we must give the CECs some actual power that justify their existence and entice parents to run for these woefully neglected positions and get involved in their kids' education. On a whole, our educational system has moved away from a holistic approach to learning and instead predicated its success upon increasing standardized test scores. This approach forces teachers to spend the majority of the time teaching to these tests, rather than inspiring in our children a love of learning that is impossible to quantify, but

essential for future academic success.

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?

Reforming our election system is the reform which begins to make all other reforms to our government possible. Right now our election system is run by the party machines solely to protect their interests and keep incumbents in office, so those incumbents will in turn keep the board of elections system corrupt. We must take the power of appointing members of the board of elections out of the hands of our elected officials and political parties and make the Board of Elections truly nonpartisan. We must also make it easier for candidates to get on the ballot, harder for party bosses to tie up candidates in the courts and bump them off the ballot, and make it simpler for voters to vote, register and change their registrations. New York City should follow the lead of the majority of the rest of the country and allow for early voting and take a hard look at electronic voting as a means for increasing voter participation and getting more young people involved in our democratic process.

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 would require total disclosure from all city councilmembers about any and all personal relationships they have to nonprofits by making each councilmember sign an affidavit subject to purgery declaring their conflicts of interest. I would also make it a federal crime to improperly fill out this affidavit, because if councilmembers don't fear the penalties of their crimes they will keep doing them.



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. I will introduce legislation to ensure that term limits can only be extended by voters.
2. I will never vote for a pay raise for the City Council.
3. I would expand community boards, so that every board in the city has an on-staff planner who will bring diversity and transparency to the development process.
4. I will introduce legislation that would require councilmembers to disclose any conflicts of interests with any organization selected to receive member item funds, whether or not that councilmember originated the request, and ban any nonprofit organization that employs a family member of a councilmember in any capacity from receiving member item funding.
5. I will fight to make sure that the housing affordability index is consistent with the area to which it is being applied and not predicated upon neighborhoods that are radically disparate economically.