



**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.

Candidate Name: John Heyer Age: 26

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 39

Campaign Address: 389 Court Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 935-0650 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: Jesse Adelman

Website & Email: www.johnheyer.org; jesse@johnheyer.org

Education: BA in Political Science and Theology from Fordham University

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Currently campaigning full-time. I’ve worked as Special Assistant to Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz for the past four years.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: I have also worked for Assemblywoman Joan Millman, and serve on the boards of two local non-profit social service organizations.

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: 7/21

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

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| 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 a non-partisan system as suggested |

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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| 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 but with 60% vote if chair opposes
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? Oppose
- 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 with respect to increases only

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.

I oppose the manner in which this was accomplished, but I do support three terms for council members with the terms to be staggered so that 1/3rd of the council is elected in each cycle.

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

I support giving the community a far greater say in determining where within a community board district to place those things that regional and city planners determine need to be sited in the area.

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?

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?

Pension system reform ought to emerge from negotiation with the affected unions and not imposed from the top down.

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?

Oppose

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

Oppose due to concern that such a convention can be unduly influenced, but I would like to see reform that allows for greater home rule. Were I running for state office there are many other changes that I believe would create more functional system which leads to section b. where I support home rule with respect to rent regulation, taxation, and pension negotiations.

- 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?

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?

Since the congestion exists mainly in Manhattan the solutions ought to be Manhattan based. I support increasing the costs of metered parking and garage taxes in congested areas. I support a congestion surcharge for taxi fares for riders in and out of the Manhattan business districts at peak times. I support metering for loading and unloading trucks in the Manhattan business districts from 7am to 11am and 3:30 pm to 7:30 pm. I support the use of revenues raised to be dedicated primarily to the MTA and partially to alternative transportation such as the creation of true bicycle lanes and bicycle parking areas.

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

The council ought to have a greater role in setting of priorities such as the percentages of the budget that go to various purposes but not with respect to the overall budget size.

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 good general practice which is difficult to accomplish in a time of rapidly falling revenues.

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.

Spending and tax policies ought to be the result of needs assessments and the prioritizing of governmental functions. It should be informed by an evaluation of the efficacy of programs. Spending should be tempered by tax policies that take into account the spending and tax policies of other competing regional entities, as well as, the ability of the taxpayer to sustain his/her living standard. Such policies, also, vary with general economic conditions. Savings through the elimination of waste and inefficiencies are always worthwhile whether such savings are used to maintain or increase services or reduce taxes or some combination of the two.

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 support targeted subsidies to act as incubators for new enterprises but not perpetual subsidies for non-essential enterprises. Diversification should be based on expansion from our strengths.

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?

Parents and teachers should be given a more substantive role on school leadership teams, providing a balanced voice for each individual school. School leadership teams should work in coordination with district superintendents on review and oversight of schools. This would create a meaningful dialogue between those in the schools and the Department of Education. Our public school system should also change its focus – there's way too much emphasis on standardized testing. A child's and a school's success should reflect the achievements a student makes within the curriculum.

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?

The increased use of technology would enable us to place information online. That together with increased auditing and performance reporting by local boards would be a good starting point.

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?

All spending ought to be reviewable "in detail" online. I suspect that much questionable expenditure is hidden within broadly stated budget lines. I prefer real transparency to a blanket ban.



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 establish a “Small Changes for Better Communities” program to give local organizations a say and a stake in city government.
2. I will fight to give the Council a say in how our City tax dollars are spent at the MTA.
3. I will work to ensure total budget transparency, including within the operating budgets of major City agencies.
4. I will fight to give parents a greater voice in our school system, and will advocate for a change to the City Charter requiring two year terms and Council consent on Mayoral appointments to head major City agencies.
5. I will defend the rights of community members to demand responsible, appropriate development in our neighborhoods.