

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: Gary G. Reilly Age: 35

Office to Which You Seek Election: Council District #: 39

Campaign Address: 83 1st Place, Brooklyn NY 11231

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 290-6424 Fax: ()

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name:
 N/A

Website & Email: _____ www.garyreilly.org info@garyreilly.org

Education: JD, Rutgers Law - Newark, 2005; BA, Economics, Rutgers College, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, 1997

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office):_Attorney ; formerly Banking_____

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Transportation Chair, Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association; Non-board Member, CB6 Transportation & Public Safety and Environment Committees; Board Member, Gowanus Stakeholders Group; Male Democratic County Committee (elected 2008)

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

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: _____

. 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

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

Support

Support; on condition that voting in a primary then serves to register an unaffiliated voter to the party of the primary in question. And only for unaffiliated voters; I would not support a change to allow registered Republicans, for example, to vote in and "game" another party's primary election.

. 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?

Unsure.

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

Support

It is a long, grueling day.

. 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

The Campaign Finance Board could serve as a model for how we should restructure the Board of Elections. The competence and professionalism of the CFB has been truly impressive.

. 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

I would have to research this question more fully to develop an informed opinion.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM



. 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?

Oppose

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

Oppose

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

. What is your position on allowing Council committees to function more independently of the speaker than is presently the case?

Support

. Should committee staff be hired by and report to committee chairs?

Support

. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?

Support

. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?

Support

. What is your position on:

. limiting councilmembers' ability to earn outside income? I would eliminate any ability to take in outside income (except for earnings on investments, etc.) I would ban outside work as an unacceptable conflict of interest. The salary of a council member is generous enough to support those who are truly interested in public service.

. making the job of councilmember a full-time position? To go along with what I wrote above, I believe that the position of council person is more than a full time position. I don't think it is necessary to delineate a 40 hour week for the

position or institute any measure that would limit a council members flexibility to use their time as they believe best serves their district and the city. The key is to ban outside employment, including self employment, consulting, law practices or accountancies. Pro bono work would still be acceptable

. eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions?

Limit. Chairing a committee or running the council is additional work and it is fair to add some additional compensation for the efforts. However, if additional compensation should be forfeited by members who skip committee hearings.

. 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

. What is your position on consolidating the current City Council committee structure and reducing the number of overall committees?

Support

. What is your position on term limits for elected officials?

I am generally agnostic on term limits. However, where term limits have been established by referenda, as they were in NYC, I believe that we must undertake a similar process to remove them. The move by Mayor Bloomberg to eliminate the limitation on a third term for himself and a self-interested council was disgraceful and an affront to the democratic process.

. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that changes to term limits may only be approved by the voters?

Support

. 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

See above at 12.

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.

. 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

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

Support

. 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

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

Support

Oppose

I need to research this question further to develop a more informed response. I will say that I am concerned about making only prospective changes for future workers that creates a system where existing employees are treated dramatically differently than new employees. There is a fundamental intergenerational fairness issue that needs to be considered.

. 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 would base pensions off of base salaries and restrict the ability to "juice" pensions in the final year or by including overtime in the calculations.

. 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?

First is apportionment of the prisoners when establishing districts. The current process of counting prisoners, who are not allowed to vote, towards apportioning representation in the legislature creates perverse distortions (and perverse incentives) in our representative bodies. Second, I would revisit the powers allocated to municipalities, particularly cities of a certain size that could use some additional discretion in their own affairs. Third, I would revisit our sprawling system of quasi-public authorities._____

a. 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, as noted above. Particularly in our control of our streets - I would give the city the ability to implement a residential parking permit regime, and allow the City the ability to toll the East and Harlem River crossings._____

. 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?

First and foremost, we need a more progressive taxing scheme at the state level that supports improving our transit infrastructure. However, based on the experience of the Pataki years onward, we cannot rely on our state government to be a reliable and responsible supporter of transit. I would implement the following specific, dedicated funding mechanisms (in addition to the restored commuter tax): toll the free East and Harlem River crossings, price our "free" street resources by implementing residential parking permits, and work with our Federal partners to increase gasoline taxes at the Federal level. Unfortunately, increasing our state gas tax is relatively ineffectual given our close proximity to low-tax states like New Jersey. Another avenue to pursue would be a compact with Connecticut and New Jersey to address gas taxes and regional transit planning on a regionwide basis.

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

The Council should have a more input into allocations in the City budget. We could move to a system that is more akin to the process of the US House to allow for more Council input.

. 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?

If you are referring to the Mayor's discretionary \$2 Billion tax rebate from last year, I was a vocal opponent of that decision. I actually would have allocated those funds largely to transit investment given the massive hole that the MTA's capital plan is facing.

. 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.

I would increase the progressivity of the City's income tax schedule and avoid increasing regressive taxes such as sales taxes. In general, I believe New Yorkers receive good value for taxes paid. I would increase marginal income tax rates before cutting city services.

. 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 believe it is a mistake to rely too heavily on the FIRE economy. One thing that we can do to broaden the jobs base is to preserve space that is zoned for manufacturing and industrial uses. Pressure to convert these properties for luxury residential uses have caused viable employers to be driven out of our city at a time we need them more than ever. Second, I would invest in incentives to new technology businesses focused on green energy (solar, wind, geothermal) to drive the next generation of growth industries in our city. Lastly, I would focus on the infrastructure of New York (transit, freight, sewers, electrical grid, communications, education) to keep New York the most desirable place to live and work, which will itself attract new employers looking for a high quality talent pool.

. 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?

We need to preserve a voice for parents and educators in our school governance structure. I would bolster the role of CECs to take an active role in the system. I would also work for more independence of the School Board from the Mayor by appointing a majority of the Board by other parties, such as the Borough Presidents, public Advocate, Comptroller and City Council President. I would also change the role of Superintendents to spend more of their time focused on the issues affecting their own principals and district areas.

. 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?

Sunlight is the most powerful disinfectant. We need to overhaul the reporting of the BOE by making filings more accessible online. In addition, we need to reform the electoral process to make the process of running for office more user-friendly and accessible. Forms should be created to allow online filing. Downloadable forms for petitions and petition cover sheets should be made available. And the Board should provide a more helpful role to those seeking office.

. 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?

As recent disclosures (and criminal prosecutions) have made evident, we need more transparency in where our money goes and who is employed by organizations receiving City money. Any organization that employs family members of a Council member should be subject to strict oversight and heightened audit requirements.

We are paid to serve the public, not to enrich our selves and our families from the Treasury. I feel very strongly that no councilmember should be allowed to dispense monies to an organization that employs or otherwise remunerates a family member or entity controlled by a family member of that council member.

Additional Comments:



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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