



**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: Bob Zuckerman Age: 48

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

Campaign Address: 513 Court Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 360-1460

Party Affiliation(s): DEM Campaign Manager Name: Jen Handler

Website & Email: www.Zuckerman2009.com; bob@zuckerman2009.com

Education: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Emory University; Juris Doctorate from American University

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Currently on leave as the Executive Director of the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation (GCCDC) and Gowanus Canal Conservancy (GCC)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Chair, Environmental Protection Committee, Community Board Six, Brooklyn; Former President, Stonewall Democratic Club, Independent Neighborhood Democrats; Former Board member, Lambda Independent Democrats; Member, Fair Trade Committee, Park Slope Food Coop; Volunteer on numerous political campaigns.

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: Bob Zuckerman //S// Date: August 10, 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Zuckerman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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

I believe that more people should be involved in the democratic process, not fewer, so I would support a change in the law to allow unaffiliated voters to vote in a party primary.

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

The current board of elections system is rife with political patronage which needs to be weeded out as soon as possible. The board of elections should be run by professionals - not party members chosen by the party bosses.



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

I testified at a Government Operations committee hearing a year ago that the City Council should become a full-time position, and that outside employment for council members should be banned. City Council members earn way above the city's median income. They are paid full time salaries, so they should be working as full time members serving their constituents. There is too much opportunity for potential conflict. I might allow an exception for teaching up to ten hours a week.

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

I support term limits. For executive offices like Mayor and Governor, I believe 8 years is the sufficient limit. For legislators, I believe 12 years is the appropriate limit.

However, I was firmly against the city council overturning the people's will in voting for eight year limits. Any change to that law should have been made by voter referendum, not by council vote.

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

I was the first candidate in my race to oppose the extension of term limits. I organized a press conference for all city candidates in October 2008 to strongly denounce it, which I invited all my opponents to attend. People's faith in our system of government has been sadly diminished as a result of overturning the twice-expressed will of the people. As stated above, Any change to that law should have been made by voter referendum, not by council vote.

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.

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| <p>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?</p> | <p>Support</p> | <p>Oppose</p> |
| <p>16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning?</p> | <p>Support</p> | <p>Oppose</p> |
| <p>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?</p> | <p>Support</p> | <p>Oppose</p> |
| <p>18. What is your position on reforming the current pension funding structure to create multiple tiers for future city government employees?</p> | <p>Support</p> | <p>Oppose</p> |

- 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?

I would try to work with the unions to find any cost saving opportunities. Once that effort has been exhausted I would begin the discussion of creating a 5th Tier of benefits.

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| <p>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?</p> | <p>Support</p> | <p>Oppose</p> |
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- a. If support, what are the three most important areas that need improvement?

We need:

- i. an independent redistricting commission;
- ii. an overhaul of authorities and public commissions; and
- iii. our state campaign finance laws need to be significantly strengthened.

- 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?

Yes, greater home rule should be granted to the City, especially with regard to raising or lowering taxes and to rent regulations.

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?

We need much greater oversight over the MTA. The state comptroller must do a thorough and complete audit of the MTA's finances on an annual basis to determine where their revenue is coming from and where their money is being spent.

I did support congestion pricing, and I support the Ravitch Commission's recommendations, although I would limit the tolls on the East River bridges to the price of a single-fare metrocard, and I would keep those bridges toll-free after 9 PM and on the weekends.

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

The City Council's spending adds only approximately 0.83% to the total City Spending. While it reviews agency budgets, it rarely makes changes to budgets as outlined in the Mayor's Executive Budget. I believe the City Council should have a greater roll in shaping the budgets of agencies.

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?

I support the use of surpluses to pay down future debt.

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.

New Yorkers pay some of the highest local taxes in the nation. In addition, New York City residents are further shortchanged by contributing *billions* more in revenues to Albany each year than the City gets back in aid from the State government for vital services and programs. The same is true at the Federal level where the City is also a net loser of billions of dollars. Because the staggering combination of income, property, sales and business taxes impose a crushing burden on families and businesses, I strongly oppose any tax increases, particularly during this time of economic crisis. I instead propose that we save revenue by: streamlining our city government and eliminating overlapping agency functions wherever possible; eliminating corporate tax credits that do not generate promised economic development, as Speaker Quinn has proposed; reforming our pension system for municipal employees; and reinstating the commuter tax.

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 have made revitalizing the small business sector a centerpiece of this campaign. The small business sector provides more than half the number of private sector jobs in our city. In addition, I have laid out a plan that would create a Green District along the Gowanus Corridor that would put in place the appropriate zoning and incentives to significantly grow green jobs in the area. Furthermore the City should continue to diversify its business sectors such as tourism and biotechnology. This doesn't mean that we diminish the amount of revenue we collect from Wall street, as the question implies, but rather add more revenue from engaging new and emerging sectors.

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?

We must encourage greater direct parental involvement in the schools. Parents, of course, face competing pressures on their time in the form of professional and family obligations. However, parents often indicate that if provided with flexible options for more involvement in the schools, they would welcome it. Schools should set goals for the number of total hours of parental involvement and promote that goal as part of a culture that values parental involvement. Parents of enrolled students could be encouraged to volunteer 3 hours per month at their child's school. They could help tutor students, participate in after-school programs, work in the office, coach sports teams or perform any number of activities that would work for their schedules and benefit the school's operation.

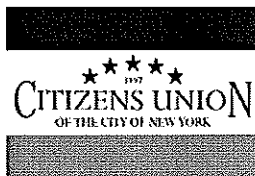
Further, the Department of Education should be required to address the concerns of parents on a school-by-school basis. Parents should be asked to fill out semi-annual surveys of their child's school administration, teachers, programming, and facilities. Once collected and analyzed that data and responses to concerns should be addressed directly and online. A culture of parent engagement, wherever possible, should be encouraged.

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 Board of Elections needs a major overhaul. First I would start from square one and rid the Board of partisan Commissioners. Next I would attempt to update the terribly obsolete system which we currently use to petition for a place on the ballot. I am also concerned with the quality of our poll workers. Many of them do not follow the correct procedures and often make up rules as they go along. This leads to the mismanagement and often an infringement of voters' rights. We must have better trained poll workers and I would seek to provide the funding and training to ensure that we hold elections appropriately.

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 believe that we must be mindful of demonizing family members of elected officials because they work for Non-profit organizations. However there is a clear conflict of interest that exists when an organization is receiving funding when a senior employee is related to an elected official. The employee of such organization must be required to inform both the City Clerk and the Conflict of Interest Board of the existing relationship. The employee must also inform the city council or mayor's office when requesting funding. In addition, the Elected Official should similarly be required to alert the City Clerk, Conflict of Interest Board and City Council Finance division when such relationships exist.



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 propose and enact legislation that would make the City Council a full-time position and ban outside employment
2. I will initiate *Council on your Corner*, the creation of a roving field office that will allow me to visit constituents in a different neighborhood in the district one night a week.
3. I will hold a town hall meeting in every neighborhood in my district at least once a year.
4. I will bring complete transparency to the discretionary funding process by posting all funding applications online (with personal individual information redacted).
5. I promise to have my community board appointments reviewed first by an objective, unbiased screening panel that will provide ratings of candidates on the basis of pre-determined criteria. On the basis of that process, I will make appointments only from among those candidates deemed highly qualified by the panel.