



**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.

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Candidate Name: **Rock Hackshaw** Age: **59**

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: **40**

Campaign Address: **548C New York Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225**

Campaign Telephone Number: **(718) 383-ROCK(7626)** Fax: **(718) 383-7626**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democratic Party**

Campaign Manager Name: **Merlin Hernandez**

Website & Email: [www.rockhackshaw.com](http://www.rockhackshaw.com), [rockhackshaw@gmail.com](mailto:rockhackshaw@gmail.com)

Education: **Undergraduate: Columbia University; Graduate: Fordham University, Brooklyn College**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): **Educator/Brooklyn College, Groundwork Inc**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

**Ran for State Assembly 1998; Executive Director of Flatbush East Community Development Corp. (see attached list of affiliations)**

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: *Herman Hackshaw* \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 07.17.09

## 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

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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        | <u>Oppose</u> |
| 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?  | <u>Support</u> | 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?   | <u>Support</u> | 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? | <u>Support</u> | 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        | <u>Oppose</u> |

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### 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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
|---|----------------|--------|

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| 7. What is your position on allowing campaign financing for ballot proposals? ( <b>Undecided</b> ) | Support | Oppose |
|--|---------|--------|

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**CITY COUNCIL REFORM**

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

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

**It was illegal and immoral. The term limits should not have been extended.**

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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.

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|---|----------------|--------|
| 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? | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| 16. What is your position on changing the current land use process under ULURP to increase the role of community-based planning?  | <u>Support</u> | 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?  | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| 18. What is your position on reforming the current pension funding structure to create multiple tiers for future city government employees?   | <u>Support</u> | Oppose |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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?</li> </ul>   |                |        |

**We may have to let employees put more money into their pension plans (increase contributions). We may also have to increase employee contributions to their health benefits, but this should be kept to the minimal expense of the workers.**

**We cannot keep expecting that the city will pick up every new medical, dental or pension cost that comes down the turnpike.**

19. What is your position with respect to the City Council Support Oppose  
passing a resolution calling upon the State Legislature  
to establish a State Constitutional Convention?

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

**1. Term limits should be set for all state, city and local elected officials. 2. Stronger money management in government and the 3. Reduction of the heavy tax burden of the citizens of this state.**

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, the City of New York should have greater sovereignty in education, taxation and election reform. In the area of election reform, people with green cards (legal residents, permanent status) who legally live here, work here and pay taxes here, should be able to vote in elections.**

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 MTA should be handled equally at all three levels of government, city, state and federal. Officials on each level need to create a new formula for funding the needs of the MTA.**

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

**As the charter stands right now, one of the mandates of the City Council is to play a major role in deciding and determining the budget. What has happened over the years is the Council has allowed the Speaker and the Mayor too much power and influence in the budget. We need to revamp some of the rules of the Council pertaining to the city budget.**

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?

**Any surplus for any fiscal year should be used to pay debts, as far as I know, we spent a portion of our annual budget servicing old debts, the quicker we pay, the more money we will have to provide actual services.**

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.

**I don't believe taxes should be raised at all, residents are paying taxes that are too high and the wealthy of New York should pay higher taxes. There should be a surcharge for people making over \$250,000. This money should go to academics, vocational programs, and recreational programs for minority youths. We need to provide better services in the area of senior care and better quality of life. There are currently no services that I would cut until I can feasibility review areas in which there is waste then, we can determine where we can cut services. We need to maintain services until we study and decide what services are necessary to provide to all our citizens.**

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?

**Again, the wealthy should pay more taxes. We should definitely diversify, diversity is always good but it all starts with the wealthy paying their fair share.**

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?

**We should return to school boards, elected and appointed by a non-partisan panel set up in each school district. There should be a rigorous review of each candidate's qualifications. The review board should consist of educators, businessmen, parents, etc. There should be a method for selecting who is on the school board and the school board should be filled with enough people who live in the communities and have the student's interest at heart. The school boards should be large, diverse and autonomous.**

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?

**In order to increase transparency of the Board of Elections in the City of new York's operations, we must remove the influence of political parties on the board of elections, review the city charter and create proposals to stop the influence of party hacks and political people pushing their own agenda.**

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?

**Any nonprofit in which council members' relatives are directly involved, funding should be specially reviewed. These organizations must be disclosed to the public by the councilperson and any violation would result in criminal charges. A special department should be created to review these requests, this would allow for a more stringent review and a decrease in the misallocation of City funds. Currently, there is no one doing a final review of this type of spending and it is imperative that the public is aware of where money is being spent.**



**Additional Comments:**

There are also many other issues that I discuss in my platform, please visit [www.rockhackshaw.com](http://www.rockhackshaw.com), where my comprehensive platform is posted that has my ideas for solutions to many of the issues faced by my community and the city as a whole. I have covered some of these issues in detail in my platform.

**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. Come up with more creative ideas for solving our perpetual education crisis.
2. To create legislation that will ensure a term limit referendum, which can only be overturned by the people with another referendum.
3. To ensure there will be more community input about community development, through a community board that should be given greater power to deal with development and land issues.
4. To generate creative ideas for solving and resolving issues plaguing our minority male youth (i.e. joblessness, homelessness, crime, under-education, etc)
5. To identify areas in this city where dilapidated edifices can be rehabilitated for low income and middle class living accommodations.