



**CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL ELECTION 2010**

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 "Endorsed Candidate" for a special election. In order to receive Citizens Union's "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: Jonathan J. Judge Age: 24

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 44<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Campaign Address: 345 Webster Avenue, Apt. 2N, Brooklyn, New York 11230  
Campaign Telephone Number: 718-374-6702 Fax: 718-285-0786

Party Affiliation(s): People's Voice / Republican  
Campaign Manager Name: Samuel M. Rivera  
Website & Email: [www.JonathanJudge.com](http://www.JonathanJudge.com) / [jonathan@jonathanjudge.com](mailto:jonathan@jonathanjudge.com)

Education: B.A. Classics & Linguistics, Magna Cum Laude, CUNY Brooklyn (Macaulay Honors College); M.A. Politics/Political Ethics, New York University (in progress)

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Community Coordinator, Brooklyn Community Board 14

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: President, Brooklyn Young Republican Club; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Bay Ridge Community Council; Recording Secretary, 70<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council; Kings County Republican County Committee Member

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 "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)*

Signature of Candidate: Jonathan J . Judge

Date: 2/22/2010

## 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

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**

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### 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**

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

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**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**
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? **Support**
  - 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**

14. What is your position on the extension of term limits for the city's elected officials to three consecutive four-year terms? Please explain your answer.

**Oppose**

I truly believe eight years is enough. I fully support a two consecutive four-year term limit because eight years represent eight different budgets, many rezonings and development projects, many capital projects, among others. Because of the profound impact that these decisions can have in the long term for the future viability of our city, the people really ought to have new blood in city government at the very most every eight years to keep city government lean, clean and responsive.

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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.

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?

**I would require more information before taking a position on this issue.**

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

**Support**

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?

**Support**

- 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?

Besides the legal impossibilities, we have made a commitment to the current workers of our City to provide certain benefits in exchange for their commitment to serve in the New York City municipal workforce. So we cannot take that away. However, between a substantial increase in the size of the municipal workforce over the past several years and a tremendous giveaway in benefits packages for municipal employees, we can no longer afford to keep New York City affordable for the very people whom City government serves as well as the people who work for the City of New York. Using attrition, we must reduce any new hires in non-uniform city agencies to rates that are below the average number of retirees each year to help us catch up with the pension bomb that exploded in the past couple of years and one that is likely to hit us again down the road. We should seriously consider converting over to a defined contribution plan that resembles the private sector model of retirement benefits.

19. What is your position with respect to the City Council **Support** 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?

Election law including ballot access requirements and methods, campaign finance rules, and other election procedural matters; institute a nonpartisan independent redistricting commission; term limits for state legislators who serve more than 10 years; and a supermajority requirement for tax increases exceeding inflation.

- 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, and particularly the City really must have direct control over the tax rates that are imposed on New Yorkers within the five boroughs besides property taxes, including personal income tax, sales tax, and others.

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?

Firstly, the MTA follows a largely discredited model of public governance in the form of the public business corporation, or a state-owned enterprise. Most of the issues plaguing MTA finances appear to be management-related. Therefore, we should create an IBO and an independent Inspector General to keep a constant watchful eye on the finances and management of the MTA. There should be greater transparency and reform with respect to

procurement policy to ensure that the taxpayers are getting the biggest bang for their buck on MTA contracts. We also must stop looking at tax hikes, congestion pricing, tolls, and fare hikes as methods to close ever widening budget gaps, particularly when those increases do not include any substantial increase in the quantity and quality of services provided.

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

Right now, the budget is developed mostly through the Mayor's Office. This is what allows the Mayor and the Council Speaker to have tremendous control over the allocation of resources, and it leaves the Council membership as a whole with little to do but make minor tweaks before adoption. The Council should have a mirror OMB-like division to develop its own budget, something akin to the services provided by the Congressional Budget Office and the IBO combined. It should receive agency and Community Board budget priorities simultaneously, as well as play an equal role with OMB in the agency budget negotiation process that includes district- and borough-level consultations. The Mayor and the City Council should both release preliminary budgets and then spend the remainder of the budget cycle merging the two budgets into one. This equitable role in the budget process, similar to that of the old Board of Estimate, would also reduce the Council's need and dependence on slush funds or discretionary funds to demonstrate to constituents that they can exercise control over City resources for the benefit of their districts.

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?

The use of surplus funds to prepay obligations is a clever way to balance the budget, but it is poor method of avoiding the tough decisions of reducing the City's share of pension and health care costs down the road. Surpluses should either be stored in a newly authorized Rainy Day Fund, or they should prompt the City to authorize an additional tax refund to all New Yorkers. It is unfortunate that the City uses this as a pass for current elected officials who authorize increases in pension and health care spending for municipal employees without any serious idea on how to pay up those obligations in the long term when the economic forecast for the out-years are not as rosy as they were before. The fact that the City chose not to do it this year is less of an indication of a change in policy as much as it is a consequence of the financial reality before us. We should always use a fortuitous surplus to reduce the burden of the cost of City government that is imposed on taxpayers, but we need to reduce the cost of our overall obligations in order to do that responsibly.

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.

Taxes in New York City continue to rise steadily over the past decade and we are receiving fewer services as a result. We should ensure that no tax or fee is increased in the next budget, and we should seek over the course of the next few years to enact property tax reductions, and

pursue in Albany sales tax and personal income tax reductions. In order to accommodate the reduction in revenue, we should seek to consolidate some of the services that New York City provides to reduce costs. For instance, the 311 Citizen Service Center costs millions of dollars more in addition to the services that Community Boards typically provide at a higher quality. Merging the functions of the two would help reduce the cost of this quality-of-service component to City government while offering greater expertise and better service in the process. We need to stop the expansion of the municipal workforce, except where population increases place the greatest need for additional personnel. Moreover, there are plenty of examples where funds just go to waste on redundancy, such as when roads are resurfaced and then are torn up again to conduct sewer work, only to be resurfaced again.

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?

The only way to become less reliant on Wall Street is to support growth of small-to-medium businesses in New York. There is plenty of opportunity to spur entrepreneurship through special loan programs and the assistance of the NYC Department of Small Business Services while reducing the cost of over-regulation and draconian fines, which would encourage local growth. However, Wall Street's revenue provides the greatest support for the cost of City government and so we should not do anything to harm the fact that financial firms prefer to reside in Manhattan as opposed to New Jersey and locations outside the City of New York. The reduction in spending, once again, would come from changes in future employee benefits packages and the size of the municipal workforce.

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?

The elections that were held for the Community Education Councils earlier last year were a great step in the right direction. However, we need more choice in the public education system to give parents and teachers the ultimate decision on the best way to provide education for our children. This is wholly dependent on having enough charter schools and tuition tax credits/vouchers for private/parochial/yeshiva schools so there are real choices on where to teach and where to send our children.

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 many reforms. Among such reforms would include giving online public access to all voter registration data, making petitions readily accessible online, televising meetings of commissioners, and other similar measures. As the agency is rife with patronage, the names, titles, salaries and partisan affiliation of all personnel should be made publicly accessible, including the name of the individual who is responsible for the appointment. Since the quality and integrity of poll workers are crucial for a free, fair and open election, the names and partisan affiliations of poll workers should also be made publicly available for every poll site to instill public

confidence over the integrity of the conduct of the election. Moreover, the reforms CU offers regarding the composition and partisan nature of the staff at the Board of Elections are also crucial for fixing this extremely important component of New York City and New York State government.

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?

The most important component would be to abolish the individualistic nature of discretionary funds and require each proposal for community grant funding to be submitted for full consideration by the City Council. This way, questions about affiliations between organizations and the families of elected officials can arise in debate. Moreover, a council member should be obligated to declare fully any conflict of interest that might arise from the disbursement of funds to an organization employing a relative of the council member.

**Additional Comments:**

The endorsement of Citizens Union would be a very significant personal affirmation of my own goals of advancing reform in City government. I currently serve as President of the Brooklyn Young Republican Club, a youth reform-minded organization founded in 1880 by Seth Low, former Mayor of Brooklyn and Mayor of the City of New York—and the first Mayor to win on the Citizen Union ticket. Our club has kept the fight for municipal reform alive in many instances, including in opposing the extension of term limits and a number of other reforms that CU currently supports. It is extremely important that we keep political competition and the fight for reform in our city as lively as possible to offer the people of our city with the best government their tax money can provide—and at the best cost possible. I would be both honored and privileged to carry the CU endorsement into the upcoming special election, especially in a district whose history represents well the need for municipal political reform.





## **CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

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 2010 CAMPAIGN PROMISES**

1. Vote against any tax or fee hike in the upcoming budget and restore the \$400 property tax rebate
2. Provide more choice in education through tuition tax credits and vouchers for lower-to-middle income families
3. Increase capital funding to improve our public transportation infrastructure, particularly to increase accessibility for people with disabilities
4. Protect funding for essential city services like police, fire and sanitation to keep our streets safe and clean for all New Yorkers
5. Amend the City Charter to protect the will of the voters on term limits by making a referendum mandatory on any future changes to the term limits law