

CITIZENS UNION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL ELECTION 2009

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questions related to Council and election reform policy issues facing the City of New York. We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire on our website and in other appropriate venues.

Citizens Union will also be using your answers to guide the process of evaluating candidates for this office and to assist us in determining whether to issue a candidate "endorsement."

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Julissa Ferreras Age: 32

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: Council District 21

Campaign Address: Office: 40-53 99th St, Corona, NY 11368; Mail: 99-02 37th Ave, #212 Corona, NY 11368

Campaign Telephone Number: (718) 429-9650 Fax: (718) 429-7662

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Ted Fertik

Website & Email: julissa2009@gmail.com - www.julissaferreras.com

Education: John Bowne High School, Metropolitan College

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Currently unemployed, previously Chief of Staff to City Councilman Hiram Monserrate, and New York Director for the National Association of Latino Elected Officials

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: NAACP Youth Council President, Director of Hanac-Corona Beacon School, Democratic District Leader

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? **YES**

(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Preferred Candidate" and "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

I. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Please state your position on the following reform measures. Specify 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 on allowing independents to vote in party primaries? Oppose

Comments: As an educator of civic education I understand the importance of allowing as many voters to participate in any election. However, I also understand that voters identify with a party based on core principles and their primaries allow them to elect the best candidate within their party.

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

Comments: I would like to discuss this proposal in more depth to get a better understanding of the mechanics of the referenda, but in general I am supportive of measures that give the voting public a more powerful voice.

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

Comments: If this will open up the process and give citizens more incentives to perform poll work, which is a valuable public service, then I am supportive.

4. What is your position on requiring that the Board of Elections in the City of New York be included in the preliminary and final mayor's management report? Support

Comment: I support this position requiring the Board of Elections to be included to add transparency and accountability to the Board of Elections.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

5. What is your position on establishing stricter requirement for the disbursement of campaign finance matching funds to candidates that face non-competitive challengers? Support

Comments: I am a firm believer in safeguarding taxpayers' money, and we need to be careful with how we dispense matching funds so that the system is as fair and cost-effective as possible.

6. What is your position on banning the transfer of funds that were raised in a previous election cycle into a current account? *Oppose*

Comments:

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

Comments: I would want to better understand the qualifications and criteria for public financing of ballot initiatives.

8. What is your position on lowering the campaign contribution limit for City Council candidates from the current \$2,750 for those who participate in the city's campaign finance program? *Support*

Comments: _____

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9. What is your position on lowering the expenditure limit for City Council candidates who participate in the city's campaign finance program? *Support*

Comments: _____

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CITY COUNCIL REFORM

10. 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

Comments: I support greater distribution of power throughout the council, and empowering committees is an important step we need to take.

11. What is your position on eliminating or limiting stipends for committee chairs and leadership positions? Support

Comments: _____

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

Comments: _____

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

Comments: I was a vocal opponent of the term limits extension measure by the City Council.

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

Comments: _____

POLICY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

15. What is your position on transferring prosecutorial power over substantiated claims of police misconduct to the Civilian Complaint Review Board? If oppose, what would you propose to ensure sufficient public oversight and effective adjudication in handling claims of alleged police misconduct? Support

Comments: _____

16. Do you believe that the State Legislature should renew mayoral control of the city's public schools in its present form? If oppose, what specific changes to the current system would you recommend?

Comments: My position on mayoral control has been that it should be renewed, but only with increased parent and community participation and accessibility.

17. What is your position on establishing mandatory inclusionary zoning standards and requirements for all new residential development projects? If so, what should be the minimum percentage set aside for low income households? Support

Comments: I helped lead the fight for unprecedented inclusionary zoning at Willets Point, and I am fully supportive and will fight for broad-based inclusionary zoning mandates. I have pledged to fight for inclusionary zoning for upwards of 50% affordable housing on projects using taxpayer dollars.

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

Comments: Community input and community-based planning have to be a critical part of the development process.

19. What is your position on the Ravitch Commission's recommendations for new revenue sources for funding the MTA and altering its governance? Please explain your answer, as well as your thoughts on how the experiences of the debate surrounding the city's efforts to implement congestion pricing can inform the current discussion. Support

Comments:

I am supportive of the payroll tax. The burden of our budgetary problems cannot be placed solely on the backs of working families. I cannot condone a fare hike on New Yorkers who are buckling under a weak economy already, and the spirit of "shared sacrifice" must become a reality if we are going to pull through these tough times.

I have been a supporter of congestion pricing because I believe we need to take responsibility for our environment and help reverse the effects of global warming in every way we possibly can.

We need to make public transportation work for all of our families. As the daughter of an MTA mechanic, I respect transit workers and the importance of the bus and subway system to our communities. I believe that the MTA must serve the transportation needs of all residents and I will fight to keep affordable fares, safe routes to schools and safe routes for seniors, a system for faster buses with better service further away from subway stations.

Please use the space provided or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the above issues. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

CAMPAIGN PROMISES BEING MADE TO VOTERS IN 2009

Citizens Union is adding a new element to its evaluation of incumbents running for re-election. In addition to evaluating their stances on the issues above, Citizens Union will assess incumbents on how well they kept the promises they made to voters during the previous election.

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing what are the top five promises you are making to the voters during this campaign?

We thank you very much for your response. Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient.

TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES BEING MADE IN 2009

1. Ensure Development that Benefits the Entire Community.

When new buildings go up, the community should benefit. That's why I worked so hard to ensure that the Willets Point redevelopment plan includes job training and placement opportunities for more than 1,300 Queens workers and guarantees that 35% of new apartments will be offered at rates that are affordable for working families. And that's why I'll continue to be a strong advocate for affordable housing, community input, and local hiring.

2. Advocate for Rights for Immigrants to Thrive.

As the proud daughter of Dominican immigrants and having helped many immigrants obtain citizenship, I know that immigrants work hard in the toughest jobs in New York. It's only fair that new Americans who are subject to the same laws and taxes as U.S. citizens, who serve in the military, have a voice in our government. I will work for voting rights for all documented immigrants.

3. Protect Local Businesses.

Throughout my career – in government and as a board member for the Dominican National Roundtable and the New York Director of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials -- I have strongly supported programs to give small and minority-owned businesses a fair chance and fair treatment from the City.

4. Create Smaller Class Sizes in All of Our Schools.

I got my start working in our schools as Beacon Director at P.S. 19, the nation's most overcrowded school. That's why I have pledged to create smaller classes at every level, from pre-school to high school.

5. Support Women and Families at Home and at Work.

I understand what a strong family needs. I support more funding for child care, paid time off for childbirth and to take care of sick family members and affordable, community-based solutions for health care.

Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee
299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007
or via fax to 212.227.0345