



2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questions related to policy issues facing the City of New York that are of concern to Citizens Union and residents 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.

If you seek our support, we would also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. We will not automatically schedule an interview with you if you return this questionnaire, as we prioritize competitive races and resources constrain us from evaluating all races. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed. We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Stephen Levin

Age: 32

Campaign Address: 145 Java Street, Brooklyn NY 11222

Campaign Telephone Number: (347)464-8640

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat Campaign Manager Name: Casey Adams

Website & Email: www.stephenlevin.com + levin2013@gmail.com

Education: _____

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Councilmember for the 33rd District in Brooklyn since January 2010

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

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

(Please note: Citizens Union can only grant its support to candidates we have interviewed. If you would like to be interviewed, please follow up with Citizens Union staff, as resources constrain us from interviewing every candidate.)

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Peter J.W. Sherwin, Chair • Dick Dadey, Executive Director

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Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings?

YES X NO _____

Signature of Candidate: _____

Date: _____

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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 eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system in which all candidates and all voters participate in the first round and the top two candidates advance to the second round?	Undecided
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices? (Int. No. 1066)	Support
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? (Int. No. 721)	Support
4. What is your position on requiring city agencies to report the number of applicants that they register to vote as required by current law (Int. No. 760)?	Support
5. What is your position on transmitting electronically voter registration information collected by city agencies to the Board of Elections in the City of New York?	Support
6. What is your position on requiring the Board of Elections to report performance metrics to the City Council that conform to the Mayor's Management Report? (Int. No. 778)	Support
7. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	Support
8. What is your position on expanding the Voter Guide published by the Campaign Finance Board to cover all races occurring in New York City, such as state and federal contests, and providing the opportunity for voters to receive the guide electronically rather than in print form? (Int. No. 769)	Support

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CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

9. What is your position on eliminating matching funds for contributions bundled by lobbying organizations or lobbyists?	Support
10. What is your position on banning placement agents from bundling contributions for any elected official who influences the selection of pension investors?	Support
11. What is your position on prohibiting participants in the city's campaign finance program from using public matching funds to purchase strategic campaign consulting services from firms that also provide lobbying services?	Oppose

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

12. What is your position on creating a bill drafting service independent of the Speaker's Office, similar to the New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?	Support
13. What is your position on the following proposals enabling Council committees to function more effectively and independently of the speaker :	
a. Should committee chairs have the ability to hire at least one committee staffer?	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
d. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	Oppose
14. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	Support generally, although I believe that the current disclosure requirements are reasonably stringent
15. What is your position on limiting stipends or "lulus" to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	Support

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16. When the Quadrennial Compensation Commission is reconvened, what is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation only apply prospectively to the following term?	Support
17. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	Support
18. What is your position on increasing transparency of discretionary funding by requiring the list of capital and expense funds and their sponsors be provided to councilmembers and the public three days in advance of any vote, and expanding the online searchable database of expense funds to include all capital fund recipients and applicants?	Support in general, although the practical application of such a requirement may be difficult to implement. However, I believe that greater transparency is certainly achievable.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

19. What is your position on reducing the frequency of stop, question and frisks by conducting stops more judiciously?	Support
20. What is your position on establishing the Commission to Combat Police Corruption (CCPC) as a permanent commission in the City Charter while empowering the CCPC to issue subpoenas?	Support
21. What is your position on enhancing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) authority to initiate an investigation into reported or known incidents of police misconduct without receipt of a formal complaint?	Support
22. What is your position on granting the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) with the authority to prosecute officers found guilty of lying during CCRB investigations?	Support
23. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	Support

BUDGET REFORM

24. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	Support
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	Support

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c. the public advocate ?	Support
d. community boards?	Support
25. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	Support
26. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	Support

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY BOARD REFORM

27. What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough presidents report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments? (Int. No. 913)	Support
28. What is your position on establishing a formal standardized and transparent process for community board appointments including written applications, interviews of candidates, and filling vacancies within 30 days?	Support

Additional Comments:

I believe that greater transparency in the functioning of our city government is essential for the health of our democracy. As Councilmember for the past three and half years, I have consistently supported measures that would increase transparency both on the part of the Administration and its agencies, and on the part of the Council. Clearly, we still have a long way to go on both fronts. I look forward to working with Citizens Union and other organizations dedicated to increased transparency to achieve additional measures that will increase the effectiveness of our City government but also help to increase the public's faith in our vital governmental institutions, including the Council.

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II. CANDIDATE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

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 an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- a. What were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current position and what progress have you made to keep those promises, and why and why not have you met them?
- b. What are your top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position?

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 FROM YOUR MOST RECENT CAMPAIGN AND ACTION ON THEM

1. Fight for increased funding for Early Childhood Education:

I am proud to have successfully fought year after year to restore funding for early childhood education programs both in the 33rd District and throughout the city.

2. Create more affordable housing units in our city:

I have worked diligently and successfully on requiring develops that have gone through the rezoning process to increase the percentage of affordable units to help alleviate the dire need for affordable housing throughout our city.

3. Ensure community input into the Superfund process for both the Gowanus Canal and the Newtown Creek, which are both in the 33rd District:

I am proud to have worked with community stakeholders, my colleagues in government and city, state and federal agencies to develop as open a process as possible as the Superfund designations move forward.

4. To be open and accessible to constituents:

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I and my staff have done our utmost over the past three and half years to not only be responsive to constituent needs, but also to help them individually to sometimes fight through very difficult city bureaucracy and red tape. While we have not always been successful, I believe that we have had a significant positive impact on the lives of our many constituents.

5. In 2009, I promised to develop a new housing program for senior citizens. I have not yet achieved my goal regarding this promise.

I have learned that there are many obstacles standing in the way of developing a new program for senior housing. However, the need for affordable senior housing is only increasing every day and I commit to continuing to work with a new Council and new Administration to achieve this vitally necessary goal.

TOP FIVE 2013 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. Ensure that the Bloomberg administration's promise of establishing a park at 65 commercial street in Greenpoint is honored and funded by a new administration.
2. Sure that Brooklyn Heights and Greenpoint join Boerum Hill in joining the Neighborhood Slow Zone program by DOT.
3. Continuing to engage in Participatory Budgeting, which was very successful this year in the 33rd District and work more effectively and efficiently in engaging the public on participating, particularly in areas with less resources and lower average income.
4. Work towards increasing the Council's role in negotiating the budget so that there is desperately needed increased transparency in the City budget, especially with regard to the Department of Education, which makes up approximately 28% of the City budget.
5. To work with my colleagues and advocates to develop a more equitable system for discretionary funding that takes into account the needs of districts and allows for transparency for how the system is derived, implemented, and functions.

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**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee
via fax to 212.227.0345 or via email to candidates@citizensunion.org
Call us at 212-227-0342 with any questions.**