



## 2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

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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.

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Candidate Name: **Sondra H. Peeden** Age: **42**

Campaign Address: **186-36 Dormans Road, St. Albans, NY 11412**

Campaign Telephone Number: **(646) 543-0760** Fax: ( ) **CALL**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat** Campaign Manager Name: **Christal Hickson**

Website & Email: **Web: [sondrapeeden.nationbuilder.com](http://sondrapeeden.nationbuilder.com) Email: [sondrapeeden@gmail.com](mailto:sondrapeeden@gmail.com)**  
**FB: Sondra Peeden 2013**

Education: **Please see attached resume**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): **Currently on leave from the NYC Council – please see attached resume**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

***I am not an incumbent. Please see attached resume.***

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU’s Local Candidates Committee? YES  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.)*

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**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**

<p>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?</p>	<p><b><i>I support the restructuring of our current party primary system.</i></b></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p><b><i>I support instant runoff voting because it will lessen the burden on the electorate and save money. To implement such a plan, we would have to thoroughly educate the electorate.</i></b></p>
<p>3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? (Int. No. 721)</p>	<p><b><i>The position of District Leader is unpaid and in some instances the duties are not carried out to the fullest. I would encourage creating a municipal poll worker program as a supplement to the existing placements.</i></b></p>
<p>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)?</p>	<p><b><i>I fully support this idea, and believe the findings could easily be placed on agency websites for public view, as well as be reported to the appropriate committee of the Council on a quarterly basis.</i></b></p>
<p>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?</p>	<p><b><i>As long as that information was secure easily tracked and easily verified, I would support the electronic transfer of records.</i></b></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p><b><i>I support.</i></b></p>
<p>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?</p>	<p><b><i>I support, but in special instances when decisions need to be made related to public or fiscal safety, I would allow our elected reps. and members of the Charter Review Commission to make decisions.</i></b></p>

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)

***I fully support the expansion of access to the electronic version of the Voter Guide, but I also understand that in poorer communities and with some senior citizens, we must continue printing and distributing the paper version to insure access and dissemination of information.***

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

9. What is your position on eliminating matching funds for contributions bundled by lobbying organizations or lobbyists?	<b><i>I oppose. Independent, non-incumbent candidates need these matching funds.</i></b>
10. What is your position on banning placement agents from bundling contributions for any elected official who influences the selection of pension investors?	<b><i>I oppose placement agents acting as bundlers.</i></b>
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?	<b><i>I oppose this prohibition. There are now several small, MWBE boutique firms who do not wield a great deal of influence or power whose income potential would be severely limited by enforcing a rule such as this.</i></b>

**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?	<b><i>I oppose.</i></b>
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?	<b><i>Support</i></b>
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<b><i>Support – in reasonable coordination with Council staff to avoid unnecessary conflicts.</i></b>
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<b><i>Support</i></b>
d. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	<b><i>OPPOSE</i></b> <b><i>The current number of committees on the books were established to meet the needs of the entire constituency of the City of New York, and I feel that a smaller number of committees would lessen their effectiveness.</i></b>
14. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers’ outside income?	<b><i>The current charter states that NYC Council member is a part-time position. I feel that each member should carry out their duties of the Office, but should be able to fully pursue other business endeavors that do not conflict with their work at the Council.</i></b>

15. What is your position on limiting stipends or “lulus” to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	<b><i>I oppose the limiting of stipends.</i></b>
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?	<b><i>Support</i></b>
17. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<b><i>Support</i></b>
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?	<b><i>I oppose this measure, but support full transparency. Unfortunately, I believe that by adding a three day review to the process will slow down the passing of the budget. Remember that there is already a stringent review process in place, which is not perfect, but is there. If any impropriety is discovered post budget adoption, funds to an organization in question can easily be re-allocated. Funding is never immediate.</i></b>

**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?	<b><i>I support the elimination of the Stop Question and Frisk Program, and have publically testified to this effect.</i></b>
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?	<b><i>I support</i></b>
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?	<b><i>I support with full oversight of a neutral party and/or the Council.</i></b>
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?	<b><i>Support</i></b>
23. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<b><i>Support</i></b>

**BUDGET REFORM**

24. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	<b>Support</b>
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	<b>Support</b>
c. the public advocate ?	<b>Fully Support</b>
d. community boards?	<b>Undecided – this is a complex issue because depending on where you are in the city, the cb’s operate at different levels of professionalism.</b>
25. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	<b>OPPOSE</b> <i>NYC’s budget, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest municipal budget in the US, should not be pre-defined in this manner. Due to the size and scope of Capital projects they sometimes can span a decade... we must be careful and not tie our hands.</i>
26. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	<b>Fully Support</b>

**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)	<b><i>I support the designation of urban planners to be at the disposal of CBs. I support transparency in the appointment process of CB members, and would like a report to be made to the Council.</i></b>
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?	<b>Fully Support</b>

**Additional Comments:**

**II. 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.

***NYC has the fourth largest municipal budget in the United States, with the federal budget being the largest, followed by the State of California, the State of New York, and then the City of New York. With that as a fact, there is no reason why we cannot develop methods to protect our environment, develop green industries, sustainable housing, revamp our government process to be more efficient and useful to all, and grow jobs.***

***I believe that because of my work in government, I will be an effective legislator and will start my term with an agenda in mind to help all New Yorkers, but especially those who have traditionally been disenfranchised, ignored and pushed aside. I understand the legislative and budgetary process, and have the desire to make a positive difference in this city which I love. I want to see increased funding for education, a safety net for youth and seniors, job creation and job growth. I want to protect lower income workers by strengthening job protections, expanding affordable housing and enhancing public transportation.***

***I am asking for your endorsement because it would send a clear and strong message to my community that you trust a woman, never before elected to act as ombudsman, facilitator and champion for the community. I would love to stand on the steps of City Hall, Queens Borough Hall, and at locations throughout my community to announce and accept your endorsement. That announcement would include my heartfelt commitment to serve all of the residents of the 27th Council District and all New Yorkers fairly, and to make their voices and concerns heard in City Hall and throughout government.***

### **TOP FIVE 2013 CAMPAIGN PROMISES**

1. Enhance job creation, support of small businesses and industry development
2. Protect seniors by fighting for affordable and appropriate housing, public/private/federal partnerships to control prescription drug costs. Increased funding of Meals on Wheels, and a return to daily deliveries of fresh meals to senior citizens.
3. REVAMP the NYC Department of education to have a bottom up system where parents can be involved in policy, curriculum and personnel decisions. A commitment to having educational professionals lead the NYC Dept. of Education. A personal commitment to direct discretionary and capital funding to the schools in the 27<sup>th</sup> Council District.
4. Use the resources of NYC to buy foreclosed and abandoned homes in the hands of qualified individuals and families to strengthen our communities.
5. When elected I promise to listen to my constituents, engage and fight for them on a daily basis. I will hold town hall meetings, visit schools and early childhood centers. My staff and I will reach out to people of all faiths, cultural groups and economic status to make sure they are engaged and are receiving the services they deserve. I will be an active and accessible Council Member.

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