



2013 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE - VACANCIES

Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State and our interest in reforming state government. 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 our "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 plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, Voters Directory and other appropriate venues. We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: **Victor Pichardo** Age: **28**

Campaign Address: **1910 Webster Ave. 2nd Floor. Bronx, NY, 10457**

Campaign Telephone Number: **(347-590-5886) , (267-884-1530)** Fax: ()

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat** Campaign Manager Name: **Dan Rosenfeld**

Website & Email: **<http://www.victorpichardoforasassembly.com/>**

Education: **BA – SUNY Buffalo**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office):

Community Affairs Director, State Senator Gustavo Rivera

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Community Liaison, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES NO
(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its "Endorsed Candidate" rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES NO

Signature of Candidate: **Victor Pichardo**_____

Date: **07-19-2013**_____

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. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about any of the reform measures below .

ELECTION REFORM

1. What is your position on the recently passed constitutional amendment (S.2107/A.2086 of 2013) creating an independent redistricting commission with appointees split evenly between the majority and minority parties which will be on the ballot in 2014?	Support/Oppose
2. What is your position on restructuring the state Board of Elections and changing the administration of elections by amending the constitution to abolish the two-party system of governance and operation?	Support/Oppose
3. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by, for example, lowering signature requirements and utilizing less burdensome witness signature requirements?	Support/Oppose
4. What is your position on amending the Municipal Home Rule law to limit the ability of a mayor-appointed charter revision commission to “bump” other local charter amendments from appearing on the ballot?	Support/Oppose
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote?	Support/Oppose
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Registration?	Support/Oppose
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Support/Oppose
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times as proposed by A.689-A of 2013?	Support/Oppose
9. What is your position on redesigning the ballot to ensure that voters are able to clearly read candidates’ names, titles of offices, designations and ballot questions; that instructions are clear and accurate; that bilingual ballots are required, as proposed by A.204-A of 2013?	Support/Oppose
10. What is your position on reforming the special election process, creating a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by A.5290/S.161 of 2013?	Support/Oppose
11. What is your position regarding automatic voter registration in which voter registration information of individuals who consent to be registered is provided electronically to the Board of Elections, and address information is automatically updated?	Support/Oppose
12. What is your position on eliminating the runoff election in New York City for citywide elections, and instead utilizing Instant Runoff Voting, as proposed by A.7013 of 2013?	Support/Oppose

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

13. What is your position on establishing a public matching financing system for state legislative and statewide races similar to the New York City model?	Support/Oppose
14. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support/Oppose
15. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support/Oppose
16. What is your position on limiting or banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would be able to form separate political action committees due to constitutional issues regarding freedom of speech.)	Support/Oppose

17. What is your position on closing “soft money” loopholes such as limiting transfers from party committees to candidates or other committees to twice the limit set on individual contributors and limiting contributions to party committees, including housekeeping accounts, to the same ceiling placed on candidates?	Support/Oppose
18. What is your position on requiring candidates to include the full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	Support/Oppose
19. What is your position on requiring that two periodic campaign finance reports be filed during the legislative session to reflect contributions given during the session?	Support/Oppose
20. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support/Oppose
21. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities and linking expenditures to candidates targeted?	Support/Oppose
22. What is your position on limiting the ability of candidates to accumulate “war chests” and then transferring funds raised in one race to another?	Support/Oppose
23. What is your position on creating an enforcement entity independent of the State Board of Elections to oversee campaign finance laws?	Support/Oppose

JUDICIAL REFORM

24. What is your position on a merit-based appointment system through creation of a commission for the selection of judges in all of New York’s trial courts?	Support/Oppose
25. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state’s court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	Support/Oppose

ETHICS REFORM

26. What is your position on empowering the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases involving public corruption, including serious election law malfeasance?	Support/Oppose
27. What is your position on amending the State Constitution to extend pension forfeiture, subject to due process safeguards, to all public officers and legislators who have been convicted of felonies, building on the 2011 ethics reforms which only apply to future state employees?	Support/Oppose
28. What is your position regarding changing the voting structure and procedures of the Joint Commission on Public Ethics to remove the ability of a superminority of three commissioners from blocking investigations from proceeding, and requiring further transparency of commission votes and the names of persons who are the subject of substantial basis reports?	Support/Oppose

BUDGET REFORM

29. What is your position on establishing an independent, nonpartisan budget office to provide revenue projections, display economic and policy analysis and require that the state engage in long term, multi-year budget planning?	Support/Oppose
30. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Support/Oppose
31. What is your position on distributing member item allocations equally among all legislators and requiring for greater accountability, as expressed in A.641/S.920 of 2013?	Support/Oppose
32. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	Support/Oppose
33. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Support/Oppose
34. What is your position on limiting the ability of the governor to enact policy changes governing the use of resources in appropriation bills by requiring that such bills be consistent with existing law or proposed changes in separate legislation?	Support/Oppose

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

As it relates to question 1 about the constitutional amendment, I respect the work that Citizen Union has done to keep this issue on the front burner and the work that was done to pass the legislation. I am completely in agreement that we need a FULL independent redistricting process. The fact that Assembly Democrats and Senate Republicans have been able to choose their own voters for years through the redistricting process is an abomination.

While the legislation that passed this year is an improvement, it is questionable whether it will be a fully “independent” body. Under this plan, each legislative conference appoints two members, with the eight members agreeing on the final two commission members. Seven members of the 10-member commission would have to approve the redistricting plan. If they don’t, it reverts back to the political branches of government.

There is a real question of whether this is an independent body and whether the process outlined by the amendment will break down – leading in the end to the power brokers in Albany once again choosing voters rather than having voters choose representatives. A much cleaner process would be to have a districting commission completely independent of the legislature. Having the Attorney General’s office oversee such a body might be the best way to accomplish this goal.

As it relates to question 2 about election reform, I agree with many of the goals of Citizens Union to ensure that the two major political parties do not monopolize the political system. This is one of the reasons why I proudly am seeking the endorsement of the Working Families Party. WFP has led to more competition into the party system in New York, giving progressive candidates such as myself the opportunity to win elections.

The problem is that, right now, political parties are the only way to mobilize voters who do not have the resources to mobilize themselves. I believe that the constituents I seek to represent in the Bronx, who do not have the time or money to become involved in politics, would be hurt by nonpartisan elections. Absent campaign finance reform and the FULL public financing of campaigns, what would happen is that wealthy individuals would be able influence campaigns because there would be no means of collective action without political parties. Think about Mike Bloomberg: he has spent \$250 million of his own money to win election three times. He has changed the NY City Charter in the process. He has changed his party affiliation three times in the process. In the process he has complained about the partisan nature of elections – but has actually benefited from it.

Nonpartisan elections would do nothing to curb that problem, and would do nothing to mobilize the poorest voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote. There is much to bemoan about the two party system, and partisan elections. But I do not see the alternative as better for mobilizing those in society with the fewest resources to collective action without other reforms as well. If there is a package of reforms that can attain that goal while allowing the poor and working classes to participate in the system (both voting and running for office), then I am open to considering it.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, CU is interested in knowing your top five campaign promises or goals you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position.

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises or goals 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 2012 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

- 1. Commitment to be a good public servant. Like the two elected officials I have worked for – Senator Gustavo Rivera and U.S. Senator Charles Schumer – I am committed to serve the public in a way that respects the power they have over me as well as the power they give me with their vote. The residents of the 86th Assembly district are tired of the scandals and indictments. They are tired of politics and I don't blame them. The mindset I bring to the job will be a welcome departure from what they have known and come to expect from the Bronx.**
- 2. Commitment to open, transparent, accountable government. One of the reasons I support most of the proposals put forward by Citizen Union is that they seek to make government open and accountable to the people it serves. This has been the way in which I have conducted myself in public service thus far in my career – and how I will continue to conduct myself if elected.**
- 3. Commitment to the job of being an Assembly member. All too often we hear of elected officials in Albany making a second living on their “day job” – whatever that may be. The idea that someone could make policy for the state of New York and then get paid to do a “real” job – sometimes a job that requires business before the state and thus poses a conflict of interest – is foreign to me. If elected, I will vow to be a full time legislator.**
- 4. Commitment to work with the community to solve problems. My experience in community affairs in my previous positions allows me a different perspective when it comes to solving problems in my neighborhood. Time and again, I have seen that the best way to solve problems is by asking the people who know best to become invested in the solutions. That means involving the community. An elected official's office does not give residents solutions. The office serves as a facilitator and a clearinghouse for information when a problem is at hand. Investing the members of a community in the daily affairs of the community is an important part of the role I see playing as a member of the Assembly.**
- 5. Commitment to progressive causes. At heart, I am a progressive, which means that I believe government has an active and positive role in solving problems. The “market” is an important part of how American society functions. But all too often the market leads to inequalities that are unacceptable. Here government must step in when necessary to provide those with the little means the resources to make**

themselves productive and independent. Things like healthcare, education, affordable housing, public transportation, and responsible economic development – I see a role for government in all of these things. Representing a community like the 86th District means that a strong progressive advocate is required. That is what I hope to be.

**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee
299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007
via fax to 212.227.0345 or via email to candidates@citizensunion.org
Call us at 212-227-0342 with any questions.**