



**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: Michael Ricatto Age: 52

Office to Which You Seek (Re) Election: Council District #: 32

Campaign Address: 161-08 Cross Bay Blvd. Howard Beach NY 11414

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 233-4301 Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): _____ Campaign Manager Name: Jerry Rose

Special Independent election
Website & Email: www.vote4ricatto.com / info@vote4ricatto.com

Education: College Educator / Non-degree

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

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:
N/A

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

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: 2/3/09

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What is your position on allowing independents to vote in party primaries?

I do not support allowing independents to vote in primary elections. I believe this greatly diminishes the importance and integrity of party primaries insofar as that it could be used as a tool for either party to skew the electoral process. Independents could be used to flood a primary to elect an undesirable candidate in order to give another party an unfair advantage.

What is your position on 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?

I support 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. I support any and all public referendum to encourage voter participation in the creation of laws and city charter revisions.

What is your position on increasing the pay of Election Day poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event?

If fiscally possible I would support an increase to poll workers above the current \$200 they are allotted per election event. Poll workers perform an extremely important part in the election process. Not only do they ensure that voters are afforded the opportunity to vote quickly and properly, they also protect the process from being corrupted or abused. Consequently, they should be compensated fairly for their service.

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?

I support requiring that the Board of Elections in the City of New York be included in the preliminary and final mayor's management. We need more transparency in government, especially in an agency that is so instrumental in the election process.

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

I support establishing stricter requirements for the disbursement of campaign finance matching funds to all candidates not only for those who face non-competitive challengers. Tax payer money should always be disbursed with frugality, responsibility and integrity.

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

I support banning the transfer of funds that were raised in a previous election cycle to a current account. I believe that money

not used should be returned to the city.

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

I support campaign financing for ballot proposals if it has the support and interest of voters. Ballot proposals are equally as important as voting for candidates.

3. 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? Oppose

Comments: I oppose lowering the campaign contribution limit for city council candidates from the current \$2750 city's campaign finance program. I believe lowering the limit will place more of a burden on matching funds.

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

Comments: I believe the current expenditure limit of \$161K is adequate to run a successful campaign.

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

5. 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

Support/Oppose

Comments: I believe that the committee process should be transparent, conducted with integrity and be expedient to ensure effective governance.

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

Comments

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

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

Comments: *I believe the voters have made themselves clear on this issue.*

9. 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: I believe the voters have clearly expressed their desire to have term limits as part of the election process. It should be the voters that decide on whether term limits should be modified or eliminated.

POLICY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

10. 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? Oppose

Comments: _____

11. 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? Support

Comments: _____

12. 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? Oppose

Comments: _____

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

Oppose

Comments: _____

14. 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.

Oppose

Comments: It is inappropriate to expect commuters to endure toll hikes and restrictions on residency discounts, especially when communities are already strapped with ineffective transportation infrastructure that do not provide for mass transit alternatives.

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. The city council should be a full time job not a part time job as so many members treat it. I pledge that when I am the council member for district 32 I will treat it as a full time job and my only job.
2. Seniors of district 32 must be protected .I pledge to do all I can to keep senior centers open and fully operational. We must insure our seniors receive the services and meals they require. I also pledge to oppose any property tax increase to seniors.
3. I do not believe we have explored every alternative before considering toll increases. Residents should not be charged to travel in their own community. I will fight to prevent any toll increase, especially when our citizens do not have the infrastructure to choose an effective means of travel.
4. I do not believe we can solve our current fiscal problems by taxing homeowners or businesses. This increase burden will drive our tax paying residents and businesses to other areas outside New York City. I will fight to cut government waste and ineffectiveness before increasing the tax burden.
5. The 32nd Council district is grossly underserved by public transportation. I pledge to fight for more express buses and better mass transit service, including the need to eliminate the need for transfers for services to our rockaway community. We also need newer trains. I will fight any attempt to cut express bus services in the 32 council district .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
