



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: Sara M. Gonzalez Age: 64

Campaign Address: 4505 5th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11220

Campaign Telephone Number: (718)435-6123/ (718)871-8900 Fax: N/A

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: Alice Montalvo

Website & Email: saramgonzalez2013.com

Education: Fort Hamilton High School; The College of Staten Island; Columbia University

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): I have served in the City Council for 10.5 years

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Chair of Community Board 7 (Brooklyn); Executive Director, Hispanic Young People's Alternatives; Co-Founder, HIV/AIDS Programs at Turning Point/ Discipleship Ministries; Public Health Advocate.

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: July 22, 2013

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?	Support/ Oppose
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 /Oppose
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 /Oppose
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 /Oppose
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 /Oppose
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 /Oppose
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/ Oppose
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 /Oppose

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

9. What is your position on eliminating matching funds for contributions bundled by lobbying organizations or lobbyists?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
10. What is your position on banning placement agents from bundling contributions for any elected official who influences the selection of pension investors?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
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?	<u>Support/</u>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?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
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?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
d. Should the number of overall committees be reduced so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
14. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers’ outside income?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
15. What is your position on limiting stipends or “lulus” to only members holding majority or minority leadership positions?	Support/ <u>Oppose</u>
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?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose

17. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose

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?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
23. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose

BUDGET REFORM

24. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for:	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
a. the borough presidents?	
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
c. the public advocate ?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
d. community boards?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose
25. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining units of appropriation and limiting their size?	<u>Support</u> /Oppose

26. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
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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)	<u>Support/</u>Oppose
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?	<u>Support/</u>Oppose

Additional Comments:

1-I fear that this may open the door for wealthy candidates to have a greater influence over elections, particularly in down ballot races, where the press aren't pay quite as much attention.

4- In addition to registering New Yorkers to vote, agencies should also be encouraging active participation in voting. This is particularly true of agencies who serve New Yorkers who are more low-income and likely to be disengaged from the electoral process.

6- I strongly support this. The public has lost faith in the Board of Elections ability to administer elections fairly and efficiently. I've seen far too many lines stretching around the block on Election Day of people waiting to vote.

12- Power at the Council needs to be decentralized. Members should be equals. Right now the Speaker has too much influence. Much of this influence comes from the Speaker's ability to hire central staff.

13 D- I would explore taking some committees back down to the subcommittee level, if they are not doing relevant, meaningful work. Some committees are redundant.

16- It is inappropriate and self serving for members to authorize their own pay increases.

17- Member items fund programs and organizations that do crucial work in our communities. They should be distributed based on need. They are too important to be used to reward political loyalty, or punish members who clash with the Speaker.

18- I am open to any ideas that increase transparency and restore the public's faith in government.

21- I am afraid this would open the door for investigation based only on rumor.

22- The CCRB should refer cases to existing offices, such as the District Attorney, that already possess the authority to prosecute.

24- As a former Community Board Chair I'm a strong believer that these offices provide vital services to all New Yorkers and opportunities for public dialogue. Their budget shouldn't be subject to politics.

27, 28- I support this so long as the discretion of the Borough Presidents and Community Board Chairs are maintained.

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. **Improving educational resources in District 38:** Since elected, I have fought to bring nearly \$500 Million in educational resources to my District. This term, I continued to fight for better schools. I recently attended the first graduation of Sunset Park High School – something I worked towards over decades of advocacy. I successfully fought against co-locations of Charter Schools in Sunset Park and Red Hook Public Schools. I fought for increased capital funds to renovate gymnasiums, refurbish libraries and restrooms, build dance studios and more. I have worked to ensure our schools have greater access to cultural programming. Recently, I successfully fought to save a local Sunset Park Public School from closure.
2. **Fight for affordable housing:** Since last elected, I worked to ensure inclusionary housing was included in future rezonings in my District and ensured that happened. I also was the primary sponsor of Local Law 16-2012, which extended rent stabilization in New York City, benefiting millions of renters, including many in my communities.
3. **Advocate for more services for our immigrant communities:** Each year since last elected, I have advocated for and successfully secured funds for Adult Literacy services in all five boroughs. My Adult Literacy Initiative has provided millions of dollars to non-profit groups offering free ESL, GED, and Adult Basic Education

courses. I have been a proud co-sponsor of countless pro-immigrant bills in the Council.

4. **Reforming Juvenile Justice in NYC:** In this past term alone as Chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee, I have sponsored and passed legislation to: merge the Department of Juvenile Justice with ACS, increase transparency and oversight for secure City detention centers, and raise the age of criminal responsibility for non-violent offenders to 18. My Committee has also been instrumental in enacting the Close to Home Initiative, allowing for more of our young people to receive holistic community-based alternatives to incarceration.
5. **Supporting our seniors:** This past term, I was fortunate enough to be able to directly save two senior centers in my District from closure: United Senior Center of Sunset Park and the Red Hook Senior Center. As Budget Negotiator for Brooklyn, I have worked to combat the Administration's cuts for senior services throughout the City.

TOP FIVE 2013 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. To advocate for City, State and Federal resources to rebuild Sandy ravaged parts of Red Hook.
2. Continue to advocate for affordable housing, and the preservation of public housing.
3. Continue to expand educational opportunities for our children.
4. Continue to invest in parks and open spaces to improve quality of life in our community.
5. Continue to improve outcomes for young people, across the city, who come into contact with the justice system.

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.