



2014 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State and our interest in reforming state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than July 11th.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office in order to determine our "Preferred Candidates" for the September 9th Primary Election, and our "Endorsed Candidates" for the November 4th General Election.

If you seek our support, we will 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 and have not heard from us.**

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: _____ Gus Christensen _____ Age: _____ 42 _____

Campaign Address: _____ 1461 First Avenue, Suite 191, New York, NY 10075 _____

Campaign Telephone Number: (917) _____ 216-0407 _____ Fax: () _____

Party Affiliation(s): _____ DEM _____ Campaign Manager Name: _____ Thomas Haslip _____

Website & Email: _____ www.Gus2014.com _____ gus@guschristensen.com _____

Education: _____ BA, Yale University, 1994; MBA, Wharton, 2003 _____

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): _____ Assembly Candidate (Jan 2013 to Present), Investment Banker, Evercore Partners (2005 to Dec 2014); Investment Banker, Goldman Sachs (2003 to 2005); Fixed Income Trader, JP Morgan (1994 to 2000) _____

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: 1st Time Candidate for Elected Office; Dir., NY Landmarks Conservancy; Dir., Woodlawn Cemetery; Pres., Lenox Hill Democratic Club _____

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

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____ 7/11/14 _____

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.

ELECTION REFORM

1. What is your position on the redistricting proposition amending the constitution on the November ballot that would create an independent commission with appointees split evenly between the majority and minority parties?	Support
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 strict two-party division of governance and operation?	Support
3. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by lowering signature requirements and utilizing less burdensome witness signature requirements?	Support
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
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote? Currently those on parole may obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief to have their right to vote restored, but few of these are granted, and they cannot be applied for immediately upon release.	Support
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Voter Registration?	Support
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Support
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times over a period of several days?	Support
9. What is your position on reforming the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by S.161/A.5290 ?	Support
10. 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 updated automatically?	Support
11. What is your position on consolidating the state and federal primary to the third week in June, while ensuring that the legislative session ends at least two weeks prior?	Support
12. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for primary elections in citywide election in New York City, effectively eliminating the need for a separate runoff election?	Support

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

13. What is your position on establishing a matching public financing system for state legislative and statewide races similar to the New York City model?	Support
14. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support
15. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM (CONTINUED)

16. What is your position on limiting or banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would have the constitutionally-protected right to form separate political action committees.)	Support
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
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
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
20. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support
21. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities?	Support
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 in which they run?	Support
23. What is your position on clarifying the definition of coordination between candidates and political committees to ensure candidate contribution limits are not exceeded, and expenditures and contributions are properly reported?	Support

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
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

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
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?	Support

BUDGET REFORM

28. What is your position on requiring the governor’s budget submission to present the full scope of the state’s financial obligations, including its public authorities?	Support
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
30. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Support
31. What is your position on ensuring adequate disclosure and itemization of discretionary funds, including member items and lump sum funds, as well as reporting on their usage?	Support
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
33. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Support
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

ADDITIONAL REFORM

35. What is your position on enactment of legislative rules reform to strengthen rank-and-file members' roles in the legislative process and create more equity between members?	Support
36. What is your position on the webcasting of all legislative proceedings for both houses of the legislature, including committee meetings, hearings and session proceedings?	Support
37. What is your position on having the Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey appointed directly by the Board of Commissioners, and having the position of Chair of the Board rotated between representatives of New York and New Jersey?	Support

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.

I believe that the electoral and campaign finance laws in New York State as currently enacted, as well as the policies and practices of the two major political parties, serve to protect incumbents and entrench power in the hands of those who already hold it. Low voter turnout is not a bug of this system, it is a feature by conscious design. And it's not just low-turnout, closed primaries that demonstrate this. The elected officials who collectively control the system prefer that there be as little real voter involvement as possible: almost 1/3 of the members of our legislature attained their office via special election, the vast majority of which occurred in districts where the general election is not competitive, and therefore the county committee process for selecting the candidate on the winning party's ballot was the only decision that mattered. Furthermore, the use of committees on vacancies can serve to allow as few as three party insiders to select their chosen candidate to fill a seat in a regularly scheduled election, a practice that I expect to return to NY if Governor Cuomo maintains his policy of not calling special elections.

I want to go to Albany to work hard, both to deliver results for my constituents and to change the system that leaves New York with such perennially terrible governance. I believe that I am in support of every major initiative that CU supports, but, if I ever ran the zoo, I would go even further. I believe that term limits have served NYC well, and they would serve the state just as well (recognizing that other simultaneous reforms might be necessary to give enough power to the legislature to counter-balance that of the governor, such as control of the first draft of the budget). While corruption has not been banished from the City Council, nor have we achieved some perfect state of universally high-quality legislators, I believe that things are meaningfully better than they were before the combination of matching funds and term limits together gave us a new generation (literally – members are much younger on average than they were before, including multiple councilmembers under 30 elected last

fall) of representatives in City Hall. Furthermore, I believe that positions in the state legislature should be made fulltime, potentially in conjunction with a reduction in its size or even a shift to a unicameral system (I know this is pie-in-the-sky stuff, but dare to dream).

More realistically, we should push for a streamlined voting system in New York that minimizes the number of times that voters are asked to go to the polls while maximizing their opportunities to cast ballots in the reduced number of elections. So we should obviously combine our federal and our state primaries into one and eliminate separate run-off elections in October. We should also introduce early voting, voting by mail, and no-excuse absentee voting. We should have open primaries, or at least allow same-day registration. I am very intrigued by aspects of California's non-partisan, blanket primary system, which I believe does a much better job than ours of recognizing that general elections are simply not competitive in the vast majority of jurisdictions in the state. And I think we should go further, again recognizing that this is not easily done: in a perfect world, we would move city and county elections from odd years to even years to combine them with state and federal elections, we would increase the term length for state senators (or go to a unicameral system), and we would eliminate judicial elections and replace them with an appointments process. Look, I dare to dream on this stuff, but I am also very prepared to work hard, and work constructively with my colleagues in the Assembly, to move the ball forward on incremental reforms.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS (PAST AND CURRENT)

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.

TOP FIVE 2014 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. Fight the E 91st St. MTS – it isn't just a NIMBY issue, it is a fiscal, operational and environmental mistake for the entire city. We do not need to move the MTS to someone else's neighborhood; rather, we do not need to build one at all. Manhattan's municipal waste should continue to go by primary truck to existing transfer stations in NJ (not because we hate NJ, but because there are still large industrial zones within a short distance) while the city spends the next few years focused on (i) dramatically increasing our recycling rate (likely requiring changes in the next sanitation worker's contract, which changes would not be unreasonable and which are the norm in most other large US

cities) and (ii) transitioning its garbage truck fleet from diesel to electric and/or CNG engine technologies (there are pros & cons for each, but while each requires a greater up front cost / truck, the annual operating costs are significantly lower, leading to payback periods of 1 to 3 years on the incremental investment depending on relative energy costs vs a 5 to 7 year truck lifespan). I recognize that these are primarily city issues, not state issues, but the state rules over the city, and certainly is heavily involved in the environmental permitting required, in negotiations with NJ, in possibly mandating low emissions technologies, etc.

2. Invest in education: public schools in my district are extremely overcrowded (as they are in many parts of NY), and I want to get creative to build more classroom space, particularly for Pre-K (despite UPK's passage, no slots were added in my district for 2014-15 due to lack of space) by pushing mixed use development, getting the state's Educational Construction Fund working again to finance that, and more.
3. Economic & housing issues: work to increase the minimum wage (the preponderance of academic research is absolutely on the side of raising the wage and, as a former executive, I have the credibility to argue that in the media and with the business community) and focus on housing affordability as a regional issue, not as just a local issue in my district or even as a citywide issue. We need to encourage increased density around the city and in its suburbs, and I have meaningful ideas as to how to achieve that I would be happy to discuss.
4. Work to improve governance on Roosevelt Island: while RIOC is a state agency, and the people of the entire state of NY own its assets and have an interest in the island, the mixed elected / appointed board that our prior governor had agreed to made sense, and our current governor should be following it rather than ignoring it.
5. Pass comprehensive campaign finance reform and the full 10-point Women's Equality Act. I put these in 5th place on my list for CU not because I think they are unimportant issues – they are very important. I put them here because I am running as a Democrat for the Assembly, and these bills pass the Assembly every year and will continue to do so, with or without my vote. It's the Senate that needs to pass these bills in order for them to become laws. That said, what I can promise that I will do is watch closely, fight hard and speak out if negotiations between the Senate and the Assembly lead to watering down of campaign finance reforms.
6. Transportation & infrastructure: I am extremely passionate about these topics, and I plan to dive deeply into the world of the state authorities that rule much of this part of our lives. I want to work on aging and upgrading issues (e.g. fight for state and federal money to upgrade our rail signaling and controls technologies to increase speeds and throughput while improving safety), congestion issues (I am a big fan of Sam Schwartz's revised MOVE NY plan, and I was deeply disappointed when the governor undermined its logic by unilaterally cutting the Staten Island tolls), and road / street safety issues (e.g. adding speed cameras; revising the criminal code to make it a misdemeanor or even low-grade felony to cause bodily injury to a pedestrian or cyclist while breaking any traffic law, such as failing to yield while turning, even if the driver is sober & stays at the scene). Note that this is in 6th place (which you didn't even ask for) because while I can't leave it off my honest list, all of my advisors tell me that voters don't actually vote based on infrastructure issues (and they have polling to back them up).

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.