



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: Michael Blake

Age: 31

Campaign Address: 837 Washington Avenue Apt. 3K, The Bronx, NY 10451

Campaign Telephone Number: N/A Fax: N/A

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Campaign Manager Name: Aaron Carr

Website & Email: <http://www.votemichaelblake.com/>

Education: Bachelor's of Science, Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Senior Consultant, Green for All, a national organization designed to lift disadvantaged communities out of poverty through a clean energy economy, green jobs, and environmental education.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: In addition to being a community activist in The Bronx and nationally ranging from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. to 100 Black Men of America, I served our country working for President Obama from 2007-2013. I worked at The White House as Director of Outreach to Minority Businesses, African Americans, and State and County Elected Officials excluding Governors and Mayors, on both presidential campaigns and on both inaugurations. In these capacities, I was the primary point of contact for these constituencies regarding the President's policies.

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:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RCS', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 7/14/14

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	Support

with existing law or proposed changes in separate legislation?	
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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 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.

Given that I am running for a seat that was vacated due to a bribery conviction, it is important and necessary to stress that I am a staunch advocate of political reforms that increase citizen involvement and decrease the likelihood of corruption. I am especially passionate about modernizing elections to make it easier for people to get to the polls. I live in the poorest Congressional district in the country; my neighbors are concerned about finding steady jobs, affordable childcare, and healthy food. The voting process should not place additional burdens on people who are trying to get by. I also believe that we should make it easier for constituents to monitor their representatives’ votes, contributions, and expenditures while in office. If we shine light on the process, corrupt politicians will have no place to hide.

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. Good paying jobs with good benefits are my top priority; bringing job-training programs to the Bronx, and making sure I have the resources to advertise the existence of these programs to those who need them most. I also want to make it easier for small and minority-owned businesses to access capital to improve the business climate and increase investment in the community.

2. Providing schools with the resources to be the beacon of light in our neighborhoods. First and foremost, we need to provide teachers and administrators with the resources they need to improve educational outcomes in our communities. I want schools to be more than places where children go to learn; I want them to be a one-stop-shop for the entire community, with health clinics and other necessary services built-in.
3. Bringing more literacy programs, financial empowerment, and financial capability workshops to the Bronx. I see many of my neighbors leave the education system with nothing to show for it. Skills-based programs would equip them with the tools they need to succeed.
4. Improving transportation to decrease wait times and improve health and wellness. The busiest transit stop in the Bronx (149th St and Third Avenue train station) is in my district, and I see how long commutes and polluted air affects people's wellbeing.
5. Expanding "Save our Streets," the anti-gun violence project, to my district, and ensuring that it receives enough funding to be successful.

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.