



Candidate Questionnaire
 Local Candidates Committee
 New York City Council Elections 2017

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York City and our interest in reforming city and state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than June 28th.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York City Council, and to issue our preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election. Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. **Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.**

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: Bill Perkins

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Age: 68

Education: BA, Brown University

Office Sought (including district): City Council, District #9

Occupation/Employer: City Councilmember

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

City Councilmember 1997 – 2005

State Senator 2006 - 2017

(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Richard Fife

Additional Staff Contact:

Address: 2005 Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd

Telephone: 917-617-4188

Fax:

Website: www.BillPerkins.org

Email: info@BillPerkins.org

Twitter: @BillPerkinsNYC

Facebook:

Affirmations

Have you completed required campaign finance filings?

YES / NO

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee?

YES / NO

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites of being considered for Citizens Union endorsements.)

Signature of Candidate:

Date: 6/28/17

I. POLICY QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures, and feel free to 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 / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose See attached
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices?	Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose See attached
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / Oppose Already Doing
4. 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?	Support / Oppose See attached
5. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / Oppose

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

6. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / Oppose
7. What is your position on increasing the Campaign Finance Board's public matching grants from a partial match of 55% to a full match of funds raised (Int. 1130-A)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / Oppose

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

8. How do you feel the reformed bill drafting process is going under the enacted 2014 Council Rules Reforms and do you think we need a more independent process similar to New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?

While I haven't been back in the City Council long enough to properly evaluate, I will say that I have real concerns that the process remains overly political and is not as fair and transparent as it should be. The process must have greater independence from the Speaker and members should be able to see requests made and their outcome. If it is recommended that a bill should not be drafted, a clear explanation should be provided. Unexplained delays should not be part of the process.

9. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
d. Now that committee chair stipends have been eliminated what is your position on reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided
10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
11. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
13. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
15. What is your position on making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of Speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

16. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
17. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

18. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
19. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
20. What is your position on requiring the Police Commissioner to explain divergence from NYPD trial judge and CCRB disciplinary recommendations and to make the explanation public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
21. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
22. What is your position on granting the CCRB authority to prosecute officers who lie under oath during the course of their investigations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

BUDGET REFORM

23. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
c. the public advocate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
d. community boards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
24. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining and limiting units of appropriation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
25. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY BOARD REFORM

26. What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough president's report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
27. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

28. In November, voters in New York will be asked whether they wish to hold a constitutional convention to amend the New York State Constitution. What is your position on holding such a convention?	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
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29. If you support the constitutional convention, what actions, if any, will you take to ensure that it takes place? If you oppose the convention, what will you do to defeat it?

No plans to campaign to defeat it.

30. Last year, Citizens Union helped craft and push for the enactment of a law that placed political contribution limits and disclosure requirements on nonprofits that are formed by, or affiliated with, elected officials, which helped prevent some significant features of an emerging “pay-to-play” culture in New York City. Do you have any other ideas to further limit such a culture and create a better environment where contributions, either personal or political do not unduly influence the actions of elected officials?

I applaud Citizens Unions work on this issue and support any and all efforts to limit the influence of money on elections and government. While the City’s Campaign Finance Program is a great step forward, individual races can still be overwhelmed by outside special interest independent expenditures. For example, in my recent special election, one of my opponents was supported by IE campaign that spent twice as much as my entire campaign.

At every level, we need legal experts looking at ways to level the playing field. Starting at the top with overturning the Citizens United ruling and down through local elections, anything and everything must be done. I stand ready to work with Citizens Union to build the support needed to make it happen.

Further Explanation of Questions #1 and #2

We must explore strategies to increase voter participation and make voting clearer and easier. Absent further evidence, I am not convinced that either of these proposals – non-partisan elections or instant runoffs – will address these important goals. In fact, both could have the opposite effect of simply favoring more well-known candidates and making voting decisions more difficult and complicated, not easier, for voters. While I’m certainly open to being convinced of the merits of either or both, at this time I am not in favor of either.

Explanation of Question #4

It is important that the Board of Elections operate as an independent agency and not be seen as under the control of the Mayor. I do support transparency consistent with their separate annual report that they now file. In addition, I support adding other metrics to their report if the ones they use seem lacking and support the Board of Elections voluntarily reporting performance metrics that conform to Mayor’s Management report. However, it is a slippery slope away from an independent Board to treat the Board as a Mayoral agency.

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

In addition to evaluating stances on the issues above, Citizens Union also assesses incumbents on how well they kept the promises made to voters during the previous election.

As an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- what were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current seat and what progress has been made in keeping those promises, and
- what are the top five promises you are making to voters during this campaign?

Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient, and to affix additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements. We thank you very much for your response.

TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES FROM LAST ELECTION AND ACTION ON THEM (because my Special election term has just begun, my answers reflect my final term in the State Senate)

1. **Increasing access to affordable health care** – Sponsored the New York Health Act to establish a single payer system in NYS and led the fight to refocus State charity care dollars on the patients that need the care and the facilities that provide the care.

2. **Improve conditions at NYCHA** - Took a leading role in opposing the NYCHA “Infill” strategy; sponsored a bill to make NYCHA subject to the oversight of the NYS Authorities Budget Office; and sponsored a law that required NYCHA to deal with scaffolding and sidewalk sheds. Much more must be done.

3. **Protect tenants and affordable housing** – Led the fight to strengthen rent laws and forever eliminate vacancy decontrol and other predatory practices that allow landlords to take advantage of tenants. We increased the vacancy decontrol threshold from \$2,500 to \$2,700; we reduced the amount of Major Capital Improvement (MCI) costs that a landlord can pass on to residents; we increased the penalty for tenant harassment to a \$2,000 fine; and we made it more difficult for landlords to raise preferential rents.

4. **Increase wages and benefits for workers** – we finally passed a minimum wage increase to \$15 and the strongest Paid Family Leave program in the nation with 12 weeks of paid leave at 2/3 of an individual’s regular pay.

5. **Continue to be accessible to community** – as I often say, the street is my office. I walk the streets of the District, ride our buses and subways, attend community meetings and make myself accessible to see firsthand what is going on and hear directly from people their issues and concerns.

TOP FIVE 2017 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. Fight to improve our public schools so every child has the chance to succeed.
2. Protect and create affordable housing and help prevent the people living in this community from being pushed out of it
3. Enact real police and jail reform including ensuring full video-taping of all police interrogations, closing Rikers Island and halting the use of solitary confinement.
4. Protect immigrants including providing lawyers and establishing non-citizen voting in municipal elections.
5. Provide first class constituent service.

III. ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENTS

Citizens Union believes that all New Yorkers deserve to be represented by officials who work for the public interest and honor public trust. With the corruption conviction of recent state legislative leaders, we seek to endorse a candidate who will demonstrate that she/he will honor the full commitment of the oath of office, and will always represent the public interest above all else.

Please tell us how you have and would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner, and restore the public trust in your district.

For my twenty years in elected office, I've served with integrity, honesty and never held an outside job. I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve my community and I've worked to never violate the trust the community places in me. I have remained visible to the community – walking the streets of my district, riding the subways and buses and visiting senior centers, community meetings and wherever people gather. I've never been a big fundraiser, though have often been targeted by special interests. And I've only raised money when I was involved in contested elections, never building up a big war chest. I've been independent, often bucking the party establishment. The only way to restore the public trust is through actions. That's what I've worked to do for twenty years, and what I hope to continue to do if the voters honor me with four more years as their City Councilmember.

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