



## 2014 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

Citizens Union would appreciate your responses to the following questions related to policy issues facing the State of New York and our interest in reforming how state government operates. Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union will use to evaluate candidates running for office in order to determine our “Endorsed Candidates” for the General Election.

We plan to make public your responses to this questionnaire in our Voters Directory and in other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

Candidate Name: Rob Astorino Age: 47

Campaign Address: 222 Bloomingdale Road, White Plains, New York

Campaign Telephone Number: ( 914 ) 481-3672 Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation(s): Republican Campaign Manager Name: Michael Lawler

Website & Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: BA, Fordham University, Spanish Language Immersion, Enforex School of International Studies, Barcelona Spain

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Westchester County Executive, 2010-present, Program Director Sirius XM Radio; Senior Producer; ESPN Sports Radio.

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Previous Offices and Campaigns: Westchester County Legislator 2001-2005, long time-school board and town board member.

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

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES   X   NO       

Signature of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. REFORM ISSUES**

**ELECTION REFORM**

1. 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?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose
2. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>
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?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose
4. What is your position on reforming the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by <a href="#">S.161/A.5290</a> ?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose
5. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>
6. 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?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

7. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>
8. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support/Oppose
9. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support/ <b>Oppose</b>
10. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>
11. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>
12. What is your position on requiring candidates to include the full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose
13. 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?	<b>Support/</b> Oppose
14. 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/ <b>Oppose</b>

15. What is your position on clarifying the definition of coordination between candidates and outside political committees to ensure contribution limits are not exceeded with in-kind contributions, and expenditures and contributions are properly reported?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
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**JUDICIAL REFORM**

16. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
17. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state’s court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>

**ETHICS REFORM**

18. What is your position on empowering the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases involving public corruption, including serious election law malfeasance?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
19. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>

**BUDGET REFORM**

20. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
21. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
22. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
23. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
24. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
25. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
26. 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?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>

**ADDITIONAL REFORM**

27. 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, as appointed by the respective governors?	<b>Support/</b> <b>Oppose</b>
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Regarding your views on the issues listed previously, the questions below on the next page are intended for candidates to further describe their positions on these and other issues related to political reform.

1. What is your position on Proposition 1, the redistricting reform constitutional amendment that voters will consider this November?

I oppose it. If we're going to take the politics out of redistricting we have to take the politicians out of the process. This proposal calls for a 10-member "independent" commission to redraw the legislative districts every 10 years. But eight of the 10 members are appointed by the four legislative leaders. The final two are appointed by the eight. So basically all of the members will be tied to the Albany insiders. The result would likely be similar to J-COPE where inaction and gridlock and status quo rule the day and Sheldon Silver isn't investigated for using hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer money to cover up sex crimes in his midst.

2. How would you seek to further restore the public's trust in government? Do you support further changes to ethics oversight beyond those made in recent years, such as restructuring or increasing transparency of Joint Commission on Public Ethics' (JCOPE) operations? Do you support further prohibitions on who can serve on JCOPE, such as all state and local elected officials, as well as senior state agency staff?

Albany is in need of bold ethics reforms, a theme I have hammered home throughout my campaign. The Astorino/Moss Ethics Reform Plan follows:

- Term Limits – Limit statewide elected officials to two terms (8 years) and state legislators to four terms (8 years).
  - Limit Legislative Session – Convene regular session the first week in January and end on April 1, when the budget is due; Special session throughout the year can be called by a petition request from two-thirds vote of both legislative houses or by the Governor as defined in the State Constitution.
  - Independent State Commission on Public Ethics (I-SCOPE) to replace J-COPE. Five members appointed by judiciary with independent budget to receive and investigate complaints of official misconduct, including sexual harassment and assault.
  - Strengthen FOIL – Require proactive online posting of records and information required for release under FOIL requests; Information would be posted on single statewide database managed by State Comptroller.
  - Defined Contribution Plan for Newly Elected – Require all newly elected officials to join SUNY's Defined Contribution Plan instead of the existing pension system.
  - Pension Strip -Loss of taxpayer-funded pension for any elected official convicted of public corruption.
  - Prohibit Personal Use of Campaign Money – Establish clear guidelines to limit donations solely to election-related activities.
  - Ban Conflict of Interest Member Items – No "member items" to any non-profit or business affiliated with a state elected official or an immediate family member.
  - Replace Per-Diem System and require receipts for travel, lodge and food.
  - End Taxpayer-funded Vanity – Prohibit any building, facility or capital project that was paid for with taxpayer money to be named for any current elected official.
2. What reforms, if any, do you think are necessary to ensure the continuation of an on-time budget, and to create a more transparent budget process that allows for public accountability? Do you believe the current balance of power between the governor and the legislature ensures a healthy budget process?

I have passed four on-time budgets in Westchester with zero tax increases in a collaborative, bipartisan manner. Westchester spends less today, with a substantial Democratic majority, than it did when I first came into office. That took negotiating skills, give and take -- and backbone. I believe in budget transparency and bi-partisan cooperation, but I also reserve the right to hold private negotiations. Budgets would not pass in a timely manner without them.

3. What steps, if any, do you support to improve the operations and structure of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to ensure it is able to fulfill its regional mission in a more apolitical manner? Do you support S.6718-C/A.8785-C of 2014 (Ranzenhofer/Paulin) that would ensure the Port Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Law, and the "Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Transparency and Accountability Act of 2014," S.7721/A.3944-C (Lanza/Brennan)? On the state's other public authorities, how would you support and engage the Authorities Budget Office to fulfill its oversight mandate?

The Port Authority has an extremely serious function to perform, yet it has become a dumping ground for political patronage. This year's Bridgegate scandal also exposed the secrecy with which it is run, and the political nature of many of its decisions. The Port Authority must be subject to FOIL requests, except where true security issues are concerned. As Governor, I will commission a report looking into the feasibility of privatizing the Port Authority. It is too important an authority to continue to operate as it does.

4. What is your view about measures to limit the role of money in elections and politics? Do you support substantially reducing contribution limits and instituting a public matching campaign financing system at the state level? What is your position on requiring further disclosure of independent expenditures? If elected, would you set an example on campaign finance reform by voluntarily limiting the size of campaign contributions you receive by an amount significantly less than the current limit, should reforms not be enacted?

Well-meaning efforts to limit campaign contributions have only sent money underground. I believe that money will always find its way into politics. The Supreme Court has opened the door to virtually unlimited funding, and that's not going away. I believe that prompt public disclosure of political contributions is the best possible solution. Voluntary spending limits would be appropriate if public employee unions did not routinely mobilize to support candidates that succumb to their demands. Those union efforts are never quantified, yet they are worth a tremendous amount of money. In that regard, reform Republicans would not be competing on an even playing ground against candidates with union support. I also support regular officeholder turnover with term limits.

5. What is your position on reforming and restructuring the State Board of Elections and improving the administration of elections by: abolishing the constitutionally mandated two-party system of governance and operation, and replacing it with a more centralized system that includes a sole chief elections officer and a nonpartisan board? How would you ensure there is proper enforcement of campaign finance violations at the Board of Elections, given the appointment of a new Enforcement Counsel?

The Board Elections is arguably the most inefficient government agency in the state, but barring full privatization, I do not believe a centralized system could be kept fair. True nonpartisan boards are practically nonexistent in this state. Members would need to be appointed -- but by whom? The current system, at a minimum, insures input from the two major political parties. That said, inefficiencies are legendary at the Board of Elections, and I would eagerly explore ways in which poorly performing employees could be terminated. I am open to ideas.

6. What specific reform measures would you implement to increase voter participation and reduce barriers to voting? Do you support no-excuse absentee voting, allowing voters to vote at more convenient times through early voting, and ensuring that voters can register to vote on Election Day?

There is plenty of access to voter registration in this state. Voter participation has declined because citizens no longer feel they can make a difference. State legislative seats have become protected fiefdoms that last for decades. New York needs better candidates and legislative turnover/term limits.

7. How would you ensure greater public access to the wealth of public information held by state agencies, including data? What steps can be taken to ensure robustness of disclosure of commonly-requested information, including improvements to the state's open data portal?

My administration has been the most transparent in Westchester history. All contracts and acquisitions are available online, as are virtually all public documents. As governor, I will demand the same openness.

8. What other steps would you take to expand transparency of state government, including the Executive Chamber?

Regular media availabilities.

## II. **STATEWIDE POLICY ISSUES**

1. How do you anticipate utilizing the \$6.2 billion surplus for the 2014-2015 fiscal year expected as a result of legal settlements from BNP Paribas and others? How would you manage New York's growing long-term obligations in the out years, given the projected \$2.5 billion gaps for fiscal years 2016 through 2018? What would be your budgetary priorities? Are there specific programs or revenue sources that you would consider increasing, decreasing, eliminating or creating?

I wrote a New York Post opinion piece in July calling on the BNP Paribas settlement to go entirely to infrastructure spending in the state, including the new Tappan Zee Bridge. I further called on Thruway Authority toll revenues to stop being sent the Canal Authority and instead be returned to pay-as-you-go highway and bridge improvements. The Canal Authority should be returned to the general fund. The only way to meet this state's long term obligations is to arrest spending growth and attract businesses back to the state to broaden revenues. That will require targeted tax decreases and significant regulatory relief. I have outlined a detailed

plan to bring business growth to the state. I have also pledged to hold spending at or below the current budget level for four years. That kind of fiscal discipline is necessary to make New York economical competitive again.

2. What would be your approach to education? How would you ensure the provision of funding needed to ensure a sound basic education under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decisions to all of New York's school districts? What changes would you seek, if any, to implementation of the Common Core Standards as the state seeks Race to the Top funds?

**The Astorino/Moss Education Plan will improve education in New York by:**

1. Repeal Common Core and replace with better standards and curriculum developed by New York educators, with feedback and input from local teachers and parents, and greater control at the district level (one model could be the "Lost Standards" that were being developed by former Regent Saul Cohen's team from 2008-2010 before being scrapped in favor of Common Core and the federal money that came with it). Main reasons for Common Core opposition:

- The standards are experimental, conceived in secrecy with no public hearings on the draft standards, and never tested.
- Few, if any, K-12 teachers were involved in writing the standards.
- It is considered by many to be developmentally inappropriate in the early grades and not based on well-researched child development knowledge.
- It is education guided at the federal level – not the state and local level.
- It actually lowers standards according to many experts, including Dr. James Milgrim and Dr. Sandra Stosky – the two content experts on the Common Core validation committee who refused to affirm the standards.

2. Develop more accurate measures of student, teacher and school performance, reducing reliance on high stakes assessments, with a more balanced, portfolio approach.

3. Reform Board of Regents by creating an elected 13-member board (regional districts electing their own representative to the Board).

- This reform would shift the power away from the Assembly Speaker and to the people.

4. Governor appoints Education Commissioner who must be confirmed by the Board of Regents with a majority vote.

- This reform would shift more responsibility for education to the Governor who is accountable to voters every four years. His or her pick for Education Commissioner would work with the Board of Regents to determine education policy in NYS.

5. Increase availability of vocational training in schools for careers in home economics, carpentry, mechanics, electrical, etc.

- In recent years, schools have moved away from vocational training. This is a mistake as many students not interested in college would benefit greatly from learning a skilled trade and be ready to enter the workforce upon

graduation from High School.

**6. Increase coordination between community colleges, local school districts and local industry so students can be properly counseled on the present and future availability of jobs, the types of jobs, their pay and benefits, and the skills needed to do these jobs.**

**7. Increase Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in schools.**

- There is a gap in the growing number of hi-tech jobs and careers and the number of Americans qualified and trained to do these jobs. To solve this, there needs to be a greater emphasis on STEM in schools.

**8. Create three new diplomas, offering more choices to students and parents to better capture a young adult's motivation in addition to his or her talents and interests:**

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- STEM Regents
- Academic Regents

**9. Ensure full funding for special education services.**

**10. Increase life skills training in schools.**

- Nutritional literacy instruction in Middle School
- Financial literacy instruction in High School

**11. Provide more school choices for parents of children in schools determined to be failing.**

- Once accurate measures of school performance are determined allow parents in schools that have failed for consecutive years other school options for their child. Options can be a different public school or Charter school. Last option could be voucher to be used for private or religious school.

**12. Pass the Education Investment Tax Credit.**

- Governor Cuomo failed to deliver on his promise. The EITC would allow for more scholarships to private schools and more funding for public and private schools.

**13. Create a new marketing campaign to encourage greater parental involvement in their child's education.**

- Teachers will say, the best students are the ones with the most involved parent(s). Greater parental or guardian involvement needs to be encouraged.

**14. Combat the problem of chronic absenteeism in New York schools.**

- The first step to a good education is being in the classroom. Chronic absenteeism is a serious problem that leads to all other sorts of issues for the child and the community.

**15. Begin foreign language instruction in elementary school.**

- While mastering the English language will remain the priority, study of a foreign language is a critical step in building a well-rounded and global student. Starting in



the early grades takes advantage of a child's greater capacity to more easily learn a language as the brain is developing.

3. Given the implementation of a local property tax cap, how would you address the concerns of localities about increasing costs due to items such as employee pensions, and the need for increased revenue?

I was one of the earliest advocates for the property tax cap in the state, but only if it came with real mandate relief. Governor Cuomo promised it, but it never came. As a result, localities and school districts are being squeezed to death by higher and higher pension and Medicaid costs in particular. (Please see specific plans listed under Question Five.)

4. What health care initiatives would you propose? How would you continue management of the state's Health Care Exchange, and address the continuing high cost of the state's Medicaid program?

(Please see Medicaid reform plan below.)

5. What is your plan for ensuring that New York State is economically positioned in the years ahead including preparing residents to secure jobs in the technology sector, and with regard to the growth of the upstate economy? How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the Regional Economic Development Council program, and how would you plan for future growth?

In 1993, Money Magazine famously called New York State a "Tax Hell" for having the highest taxes in the nation. Sadly, 21 years later New York is still the highest taxed state according to the Tax Foundation. Millions of New Yorkers have thrown in the towel and left the state – 400,000 in just the past four years. Many have fled for a lower cost of living and better job opportunities elsewhere.

Not only does having the highest taxes translate into more people leaving New York than any other state, it also lands New York atop other unfortunate rankings.

New York is ranked as having THE WORST economic climate in the nation and for being THE WORST state for retirees. And it has the 3rd worst business climate.

The unemployment rate in the state is higher than the national average and in 2013 New York's economic growth ranked 47th out of 50 states. Since Andrew Cuomo took office, New York's overall economic growth is 3.7% compared to the national average of 6.4%.

There are many reasons for such poor numbers. Burdensome mandates, 750,000 regulations, high spending, high taxes, crushing debt, and Andrew Cuomo's pay-to-play crony capitalism all contribute to a state that is losing badly.

Earlier this year, the state of Florida surpassed New York in population. Cuomo blamed it on the weather. But Florida has had warmer and sunnier weather than New York ever since Florida first became a state in 1845.

The real reason is that Florida, like most every other state has a better economy and a lower cost of living.

Despite having the same population, New York spends nearly twice as much as Florida (\$141.3 billion to \$74.1 billion) and while New York pays the highest taxes, Florida has one of the lightest tax burdens and no income tax.

To begin to turn New York around – off the losing track and onto the winning one – there will need to be bold reform. In recently unveiled a strong Ethics Plan and Jobs Plan. But to truly turn around the state, New York needs to transform itself from being a Tax, Borrow and Spend Hell into a state that lives within its means and manages its budgets –much the same way that millions of working middle class families in New York manage theirs every day – and reduces the tax burden for all taxpayers.

As Westchester County Executive, I cut or held flat the county property tax levy in all four of his budgets – the best record in the state. Also, through spending restraint, the Westchester county budget today is \$1.8 billion compared to \$1.7billion when Astorino took office in 2010. Such spending restraint is simply unheard of in politics today. Cuomo brags about his level of restraint but compared to my record he is a profligate spender. During Cuomo's four years as governor, he has increased the state's operating budget by a total of 13.5%. My administration on the other hand cut his operating budget by 3.4% over his first four years.

To put this level of fiscal restraint in perspective consider this: If I had been governor since 2011 and applied the same level of spending restraint shown in Westchester, the cumulative four year savings to New York's taxpayers would be a staggering \$46.5 billion.

The Astorino/Moss Tax and Budget Plan is pro-growth, pro-taxpayer and pro-fiscal responsibility and will take the state boot off taxpayers' necks and get the economy moving by:

### **1. Reduce tax burdens for all taxpayers**

- Begin work towards a greatly simplified system of income taxation – a flatter, fairer and simpler system that will seek the following goals:
- Two brackets instead of eight.
- Reduced tax rate of 4% for all income under \$200,000 (\$300,000 for married couples) and a reduced 6% tax rate for all marginal income earned above \$200,000/ \$300,000.
- Reduce the state income tax form to one single page. Taxes should be simple and transparent — they should not be so complicated and convoluted that one has to hire an accountant or buy expensive software to figure out what they owe.
- Move away from gimmicks and temporary cuts and put in place a pro-growth, pro-taxpayer long-term permanent improvement.
- Cut the corporate franchise tax to 5.9% by 2019.
- Eliminate the estate estate tax by 2020.
- Make permanent the property tax cap.

- Eliminate the 18a tax assessment on utility bills.

## **2. Budget restraint/reform/Mandate Relief**

- Reduce or hold flat state budget spending in each of the next four years, matching the Astorino record in Westchester.
- Eliminate most of the \$1.7 billion in business tax credits starting with the \$420 million New York Film Tax Credit.
- Medicaid reform:
  1. Allow counties to opt-out of non-mandated services provided under the state's program.
  2. Eliminate spousal refusal.
  3. Cut down on long-term health care costs by incentivizing families to keep elderly seniors in their homes, through possible property tax freezes and other incentives and assistance.
  4. Increase efforts to crack down on Medicaid fraud.
- Pension reform:
  1. Offer new public employees a voluntary pension choice between the current "defined benefit" plan and a "defined contribution" plan (like a 401K). SUNY has had such a choice since the 1960s and 71% of employees have chosen the 401K-style plan.
- Public sector health reform:
  1. Outlaw any further promise of future retiree health benefits that is not pre-funded.
  2. Encourage the creation of Retiree Medical Trusts for all employees. Will work with unions to establish such trusts at the state level.

## **3. Reduce State Debt**

- Support a Constitutional Amendment that would:
  1. Ban "backdoor borrowing" by state authorities.
  2. Restore voter control over debt as stipulated by the constitution.
  3. Require that all state debt be issued by the Comptroller.
  4. Impose a binding cap on the amount of state debt.
  5. Prohibit the issuance of debt for noncapital purposes.
- Use a portion of future surplus funds to pay down high-interest debt.

6. How would you address rising income inequality and address the affordable housing needs of the state, particularly in the cities?

I will deliver tax and regulatory relief to bring job-providing businesses back to New York. New York has the highest taxes in America and the worst economic outlook. That's why this state is losing out to other states around the nation. The jobs being created now are largely in the service industries and do not pay well. I support a federal minimum wage increase. I do not

believe minimum wage increases at the local level are productive. States and municipalities with lower wage structures will poach businesses from areas with higher labor costs. I have long supported affordable housing initiatives, and I will continue to do that -- without handing over local control to bureaucrats at HUD.

7. What is your plan for sustainability and resiliency of the state, particularly in light of climate change and the possibility of future disasters? What steps would you take to ensure that the state's emergency preparedness plan is sufficiently robust?

I am supportive of alternative and renewable energy like biomass, solar and wind. I support keeping Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant open. And I also support safe and clean natural gas exploration. Natural gas has 50%-60% less carbon emissions than coal. Nuclear and other renewables obviously are even cleaner.

Too often, change does not occur until tragedy strikes. I would call for a comprehensive review of all infrastructure including dams and bridges to be sure that they are structurally sound. I would also review and improve public safety protocols and procedures, especially along the coast, to ensure that in the event of a severe weather event that we are prepared and that the people are protected. Following Superstorm Sandy, we invested \$1 million for a comprehensive engineering study to better protect our waste water treatment plants, pump stations, etc.

8. What is your position on permitting hydraulic fracturing in New York State? What environmental and health impact assessments do you believe are appropriate and/or necessary in examining this issue?

I support safe clean natural gas exploration. President Obama and the EPA also support it and I would lead New York to join 30 other states in exploring and extracting this abundant natural resource. To ensure that our communities are protected I would follow the lead of states like Colorado where a Democratic governor brought together industry and environmental groups to put in place safeguards to ensure that exploration and extracting of natural gas is done in a safe and clean way with regular testing and measures – all done in a transparent way.

9. Please provide any additional information about your positions as well as actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on the above issues either below or on a separate sheet of paper.

### **ASTORINO/MOSS JOBS PLAN**

New York State once led the world in manufacturing, innovation and job creation but today it's largely propped up by a relatively strong financial services economy based in Manhattan. Recent third-party economic and business analyses have not been kind to New York. Due to our status as the highest taxed and most regulated state in America, the Tax Foundation ranks New York as having the 3rd worst business climate in the nation. The American Legislative Exchange Council ranks New York dead last in the nation for economic outlook. And a recent study conducted for the U.S. Conference of Mayors ranked 10 New York metropolitan areas in

the bottom 20 out of 363 for economic growth forecast – Binghamton and Utica were dead last.

Ask just about any New Yorker outside of a few select neighborhoods in Manhattan or Brooklyn and they'll tell you themselves how they, their neighbor or family member are unemployed or underemployed and how they have anxiety over the state of New York's economic condition and prospects for the future. Ask any of the 400,000 New Yorkers who have fled the state since 2010 and they'll tell you they left for better economic opportunities and a lower cost of living elsewhere.

How did we get to this point? The housing crisis and the global recession only tell part of the story. New York State government has been hostile to private enterprise for many years and it has gotten no better – in fact, it's gotten worse – under Governor Cuomo as the state's decline steepens.

Despite the millions of dollars in bogus and corrupt taxpayer-funded campaign TV advertisements run by Cuomo, New York is unfortunately not "open for business." Governor Cuomo's economic development strategy has too often relied on a mix of crony capitalism, backroom deals and marketing gimmicks.

In his first State of the State address in 2011, Governor Cuomo promised "radical reform" but we've seen none of it. By any measure, we're either treading water at best or outright drowning at worst.

As 30 states and President Obama support natural gas exploration, Cuomo stays mute, refusing to make a decision, and starving economically depressed upstate of tens of thousands of good-paying jobs that have transformed many other states.

As every other state has labor laws that assign fault in worksite injury, New York maintains an 1885 law, known as the "Scaffold Law," that makes contractors, employers and property owners absolutely liable regardless of evidence of worker negligence.

The Scaffold Law is typical of a hostile and anti-business regulatory environment in this state that's simply a job killer. Last year a bipartisan Senate regulatory reform group called the regulatory climate in New York, "death by a thousand cuts for businesses and entrepreneurs." It's more like 750,000 cuts. That's the number of regulations the business community must adhere to. And if that wasn't bad enough they must deal with high taxes and the infamous delays, uncertainty and costs that comes with the New York's outdated and unaccountable permitting, licensing and contracting process.

An antiquated approach to hi-tech start up ventures is another job killer. California is often as misguided as New York in governing but when it comes to embracing hi-tech start-ups New York could learn a thing or two about leveraging and retaining the brainpower that comes out of our excellent colleges and universities. For example, there are 12,000 members of a San Francisco-based Cornell Alumni Group. Imagine if we were able to retain even just 20% of them and what that would mean for our economy.

And while taxpayer money is being wasted left and right in this state, a universally accepted role of government to help the economy and safety of its citizens – investing in the state's infrastructure – is being neglected. Recent estimates show that 32% of New York's bridges are rated deficient; 40% of our roads are rated fair or poor; and 83% of our parks and dams are in

disrepair.

**The Astorino/Moss Jobs Plan is a straightforward reform agenda to improve the business climate and promote economic growth in New York State.** Government doesn't create private sector jobs but it can establish the climate where private investment flows and job creation flourishes. We did it in Westchester and saw the creation of 30,000 new private sector jobs over four years and we can do the same for New York State by:

- Eliminating job-killing regulations and mandates
- Reducing the tax burden
- Investing in the rebuilding of New York's deteriorating infrastructure
- Moving forward with natural gas development in Upstate
- Accelerating hi-tech start-up creation
- Modernizing our workforce with the necessary skills and training
- Strengthening our agricultural heritage and economy

### **1. Regulatory Reform**

-Sign executive order on first day instituting a moratorium on any new regulation and a thorough review of the approximately 750,000 regulations currently on the books.

-Adopt the 2,219 regulatory reforms proposed last January and thoroughly vetted by a bipartisan Senatorial working group that conducted nine industry-specific forums across the state. Among the reforms:

- Repeal the Scaffold Law
- Reform the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) by reducing costly delays and redundancies and increasing timeframe predictability.
- Reform the Workers Compensation system to include adopting American Medical Association guidelines and American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine treatment protocols to cut down on costs.

-Require agencies to publicly post approval timeframes for permits and licenses and if not adhered to, compensate the applicant for permit and licensing costs.

-Eliminate the incorporation fees for LLCs and Partnerships.

-Allow small businesses with less than 50 employees the option of self-insurance that would allow numerous exemptions from ObamaCare mandates.

### **2. Tax Relief (a more comprehensive Tax Relief Plan will be unveiled in the coming weeks)**

-Reduce or hold flat state spending in each of the next four years to begin to get state expenses and costs under control.

-Make permanent the property tax cap.

-Reduce property taxes and strengthen the effectiveness of the property tax cap by passing mandate relief, including reforms to the Medicaid program and Pension system.

-Repeal hidden taxes on health insurance premiums levied through HCRA

-Eliminate the 18a tax assessment on utility ratepayers.

### **3. Invest in New York's Infrastructure**

-Start by investing the \$3.6 billion BNP Paribas bank settlement money into the most desperately needed repairs to our roads, bridges and mass transit.

-Use portion of BNP settlement money to pay Canal Corporation debt, separate Canal from the Thruway budget and free up money that would otherwise have gone for Canal debt service to pay for infrastructure projects like the new Tappan Zee Bridge.

-Dedicate sales tax revenue from gasoline purchases to pay for investments in roads, bridges and mass transit.

#### **4. Accelerate Energy Development**

-Move forward with natural gas exploration and drilling in Upstate.

- Use SBC (System Benefit Charge) funds now at NYSEERDA to help pay for the cost of bringing natural gas distribution lines to communities where the service currently doesn't exist.
- -Renew the Indian Point Energy Center license, support Massena in their efforts to be approved for a new plant.
- -Alleviate transmission congestion and upgrade the power grid.
- -Support other renewable energy sources like Solar, Wind and Hydro and provide grants and low interest loans to farms and businesses that make energy efficient improvements.

#### **5. Accelerate Technology Start-Up Creation**

-Offer individuals a state income tax credit to encourage private investing in qualified start-up ventures.

-Streamline the tech-transfer process at state colleges and universities so students and professors can more easily commercialize their inventions.

-Pass a law that bans the enforceability of "non-compete agreements" – keeping more top talent in New York as it would open up greater opportunities for hi-tech workers and entrepreneurs by eliminating unnecessary restrictions on the flow of talent between companies.

-Support entrepreneurial networks with technical assistance to encourage collaboration across communities and organizations that support start-ups.

#### **6. Increase Availability of Skilled Workers**

-Create regional councils comprised of local educators and employers to help high schools tailor vocational education programs to match the needs and demands of local employers.

-Make job-training investments directly to community colleges to streamline the training of new workers for local industry needs.

-Increase coordination between community colleges, local school districts and local industry so students can be properly counseled on the present and future availability of jobs, the types of jobs, their pay and benefits, and the skills needed to do these jobs.

#### **7. Strengthening our Agricultural Heritage and Economy**

- Create a New York Farmer's EZ-Pass that eliminates Thruway tolls for New York farm-based trucks transporting farm-to-market products.
- Support the Ritchie/Magee legislation (S.4260/A.6024) that reduces taxes, fees and regulatory burdens on New York's family farmers.
- Support a pilot program where beginning farmers receive tax incentives to start a farm in New York State.

### III. **CAMPAIGN PROMISES**

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. Hold spending at current or lower level for four consecutive years.
2. Lower personal and business taxes to achieve economic growth.
3. Deliver at 2,000 key regulatory reforms to attract businesses back to New York.
4. Deliver term limits for state officeholders.
5. Replace Common Core with better education standards devised at the local level with teacher and parent input (please see plan.)

**Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee  
299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007  
Via email to [rfauss@citizensunion.org](mailto:rfauss@citizensunion.org) or fax to 212.227.0345**