



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: Marjorie Velázquez

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Party, Working Families Party, Women's Equality Party Age: 35

Education: BS in Finance and Accounting - New York University (NYU) Stern School of Business

Office Sought (including district): City Council District 13

Occupation/Employer: Full-time Candidate

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

District Leader AD82 Part B, Community Board 10 Treasurer, Board Member for St. John's School of the Deaf, Treasurer - Ritchie Torres for City Council, Co-Campaign Manager - Jamaal Bailey for State Senate, Campaign Manager - Darcel Clark for District Attorney.

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Maceo Torres-Trujillo

Additional Staff Contact: Eva Estrada

Address: 79 Westchester Sq, Bronx NY 10461

Telephone: 347-449-1813

Fax:

Website: http://www.marjorievelazquez.com/; http://es.marjorievelazquez.com/

Email: maceo.torres.trujillo@gmail.com

Twitter: https://twitter.com/mvelazquez2017?lang=en

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mvelazquez2017/

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.)

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

Table with 5 rows and 2 columns. Column 1: Questions about election reforms. Column 2: 'Support' (circled in red) / Oppose.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Table with 2 rows and 2 columns. Column 1: Questions about campaign finance. Column 2: 'Support' (circled in red) / 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?

I feel that the reformed bill drafting process is a good step forward in the right direction of making City Council more responsive, transparent, and accountable; however, we must do more to oversee its independent drafting, and ensure it’s implementation. Therefore, I strongly agree that though there is no bill drafting commission in the City Council, like at the state legislature, I believe this is an essential commission to implement. We must provide more funding, resources, and staffing to ensure that bills are drafted and without outside influence. Too often special interests influence the creation of positive legislation and reforms, and in the process negatively affect potential bills.

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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms?	<input type="radio"/> Support / <input checked="" type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
19. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> 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 checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose

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BUDGET REFORM

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

I am opposed to a State Constitutional Convention. A State Constitutional Convention puts all of our current safety net programs, particularly for working families and those who are most in need, at risk and would be detrimental to my community if those programs were to be defunded, and or dissolved.

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?

~~As a former accountant for DirectTV Latin America, managing the books for 16 different countries, I know what it means to ensure transparency by the numbers. Too often, communities like mine are underrepresented and not allocated the necessary resources because of special interests influencing elected officials through financial means. One of the chief problems in the City's campaign finance system right now is the ability of Council candidates to opt out of the system and raise and spend unlimited amounts of money on their campaigns. While I understand that currently there may be constitutional issues due to the Citizens United case, I think we need to pursue every legal avenue to limit this type of spending in NYC races.~~

~~If elected, I will push for more legislation that not only makes contribution information more publicly available but easily accessible and encouraged for the general public to research. We must ensure that there is a clear checks and balances system that gives more resources independent oversight by governmental bodies such as the Campaign Finance Board (CFB), and others.~~

~~I truly believe that the influence of money in politics is the greatest threat to our democracy, and I promise to further limit such influence in the New York City Council, and beyond.~~

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.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, what are 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.

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 2017 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. Quality of Life: I'll use the skills I learned as an accountant in the private sector to ensure families are not overburdened by property taxes, water bills, and long delays and cost overruns on major infrastructure construction projects. I am uniquely qualified to use those same skills to root out waste and protect families' hard-earned tax dollars while protecting services for our most vulnerable residents.

2. Education: As our Council Member, I'll fight to increase funding for public schools and meet the needs of students, parents and educators. At the same time, I will push for a moratorium on school closures. I believe in addressing the issue of struggling schools, but doing so in ways that get at the root causes without sending the message that we're turning our backs on important neighborhood institutions. No child should not have the opportunity to attend programs that would positively benefit their education because of a lack of resources in their school.

3. Expanding Transit: It's no secret that we live in a transit desert in the Northeast Bronx. I will work to put an end to this by increasing capital funding and expanding transit options. The MTA needs to expedite the construction of the new Metro-North stations in Morris Park and Parkchester/Van Nest, so residents don't have to wait years to benefit from this new service. I'll also fight to expand select bus service and bring Ferry service to the Bronx.

4. Women's Rights: It's important to me that there is representation for women in the City Council. I'm ready to take up this fight. I will work in the Council to strengthen paid family leave laws, so that women and all workers won't have to choose between their careers and their families. I will also help ensure women receive equal pay for equal work. For me, protecting women's rights also includes ensuring a woman can make her own healthcare choices.

5. Healthcare: As a person who had to confront with the expenses and bureaucracy of the healthcare system through 7 surgeries and countless hours of physical therapy over the last 5 years, I know from first hand experience the struggles working families in my community go through every day. Therefore, I will fight to ensure that families and seniors have more access to healthcare and preemptive treatments by properly funding public hospitals with the enough resources and staffing to keep patients safe.
