



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: Mel Wymore

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Age: 55

Education: Masters in Systems Engineering, University of Arizona

Office Sought (including district): New York City Council, District 6

Occupation/Employer: Writer, Executive Director of TransPAC

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: 22-year member and two-term chair of Community Board 7

former New York Times-endorsed candidate for City Council, cofounder or chair of over 30 community organizations

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Jordan Jacobs

Additional Staff Contact: Dan Gleick, Communications Director

Address: 2244 Broadway, NYC 10024

Telephone: (510) 334-7987

Fax:

Website: melwymore.com

Email: dan@melwymore.com

Twitter: @melwymore

Facebook: @votemelwymore

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

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 / Oppose
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices?	Support / Oppose
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders?	Support / Oppose
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
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?	Support / Oppose
Undecided	

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?	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)?	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?

I support the reforms from 2014 which made it easier for individual members to draft important legislation. However, I continue to see proposed legislation which does not meet the same standards of professionalism and quality of that often met by leadership-sponsored legislation. I support additional support for council members to ensure that ANY member can bring forward quality, sophisticated legislation on the behalf of their constituents without the support of leadership.

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

22. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?	Support / Oppose
--	------------------

BUDGET REFORM

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

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?

Typically I would support a Constitutional Convention. But because of current Senate gerrymandering I have concerns about a Convention, which would give Republicans the ability to rewrite important nondiscrimination and other rules despite those changes not reflecting the desire of New York voters. I am currently working to address this issue so that we can re-democratize our Senate districts and have a fair convention. If a convention does occur, I will work to ensure that important ethics and government reforms take place without also passing changes that will harm vulnerable populations.

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 believe we should explore the Seattle voucher model.

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.

On term limits: we need to have a balance between experience and empowering new leaders. Eight years is enough. New members make our government more responsive to our communities. Representation must remain fresh and close to the ground. I’ve co-chaired or founded over 30 organizations, and in each, I’ve seen that long terms of leadership lead to stagnation and the loss of new talent and new ideas.

Budgets (Question 23): I believe that the budgets for each should be increased to address community needs and ensure that each remains a strong force. However, they should not be independently budgeted. City Council members represent our communities, and having duplicative budgets to serve the same populations would not be an effective organizational structure.

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. Introduce legislation to restrict as-of-right development by incorporating required public review and require public disclosure and reporting of all sales of air rights and lot mergers.

2. Support small businesses by implementing a fee for commercial spaces which are intentionally kept empty for long periods, and by creating lease arbitration for independent business owners dealing with unfair rent increases.

3. Push for a comprehensive citywide school desegregation plan.

4. Expand supportive housing, particularly for seniors, low-income and homeless New Yorkers.

5. Expand oversight of NYCHA, create greater accountability, and increase the capital repairs budget.

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.

I return checks from developers and will stand up to the big real estate industry that controls New York. I have a 50-
~~year~~

~~record of community activism and leadership on the Upper West Side, during which time I have made inclusivity and participation foundational to all of my work. As a member of the City Council, I will work closely with the~~

~~Community Board, neighborhood associations, and constituents to ensure that my decisions reflect the needs and input of my~~

~~community~~
I will establish working groups around controversial issues, to hammer out solutions that reflect a diversity of opinion, like

I did when we established the first bike lane on the Upper West Side and when we renegotiated the Riverside Center development to win our community hundreds of millions of dollars in permanent affordable housing, park

~~renovations~~

and the first new school building on the Upper West Side in three decades - all paid for by

~~developers~~

I also support expanding participatory budgeting to include public input on all budget items that pertain to the
~~district~~

I was part citywide steering committee that brought participatory budgeting to New

~~York~~

I will also make it a practice not to endorse elected officials or

~~candidates~~

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.