



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: Munir Avery Age: 36

Campaign Address: 118-35 Queens Boulevard Suite 1220 Forest Hills NY 11375 S

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 464-8169 Fax: (718) 285-7181

Party Affiliation(s) DEMOCRAT Campaign Manager Name: Paula E. Hopkins

Website & Email: www.AVERY2014.com

Education: JD Fordham Law, BA (Psychology major, Business minor) SUNY Albany, Regents Diploma Cardozo H.S.

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): Law Office of Munir Aver –(Estates and Elder Law focus),

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: former Counsel/Attorney for Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz, former Assistant District Attorney Queens County, Former Director of Constituent Affairs for Councilmember Diana Reyna, former member Community Board 8, former Vice President Adlai Stevenson Regular Democratic Club, former Vice President South Flushing Civic Association

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES **Y** 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 **Y** NO

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: **7/11/14**

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?	<u>Support/</u>
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?	<u>Support/</u>
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?	<u>Support/</u>
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?	<u>Support/</u>
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.	<u>Support/</u>
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Voter Registration?	<u>Support/</u>
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	<u>Support/</u>
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?	<u>Support/</u>
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 ?	Oppose /
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?	<u>Support/</u>
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?	Oppose
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?	/Oppose

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?	<u>Support</u>
14. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Oppose
15. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Oppose

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.)	Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u>
18. What is your position on requiring candidates to include the full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	<u>Support</u>
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?	<u>Support</u>
20. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	<u>Support</u>
21. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities?	<u>Support</u>
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?	Oppose
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?	<u>Support</u>

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

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?	<u>Support</u>
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?	<u>Support</u>

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?	<u>Support</u>
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?	<u>Support</u>
30. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	<u>Support</u>
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?	<u>Support</u>
32. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	<u>Support</u>
33. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	<u>Support</u>
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 with existing law or proposed changes in separate legislation?	<u>Support</u>

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?	<u>Support</u>
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?	<u>Support</u>
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 York and New Jersey?	<u>Support</u>

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.

I Support many of the reforms outlined above because I believe accountability, transparency, and an equal opportunity to participate are necessary for a just society. I oppose actions that would limit the ability of people to participate in our government.

I was born and raised in District 14. I love South East Queens and the people that call it home. It is a diverse community with a growing number of residents finding it difficult to provide for their families and achieve their dreams. I have helped many of these families locate the resources they need through my work as Director of Constituent Affairs for New York City Councilmember Diana Reyna, as Counsel to New York State Assembly member Michael Simanowitz, as an Assistant District Attorney in Queens County, and as an Estates and Elder Law Attorney.

I believe my work as a public servant and advocate is evidence that I can effectively represent my community. As a State Senator, I will focus on providing social justice, economic justice and equal justice to the residents of the 14th District, and all New Yorkers.

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. Energize and inform our neighbors about how to navigate the political system and bring resources to community-based social service providers.
2. Increased investment in Job training courses and resources for local businesses.
3. Increased availability of culturally appropriate services and activities for seniors.
4. Increased investment in youth development including: expanding access to early childhood learning, after school programs, art, music, personal finance, and civics courses.
5. Increased investment in garbage collection, crime prevention, road paving, sidewalk repair and landscaping.

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.