



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: **Gustavo Rivera** Age: **38**

Campaign Address:

Gustavo Rivera for State Senate
244 5th Ave, Suite 2166
New York, NY 10001

Campaign Telephone Number: (347) 489.1520 Fax: () N/A

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat, Working Families Party** Campaign Manager Name: **Lawrence Balter**

Website & Email: www.gustavoforstatesenate.com cmalone410@gmail.com

Education: **B.A., University of Puerto Rico; Doctoral Program in Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center (in progress).**

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office): First elected November 2010.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

- Director of Outreach, Office of US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, New York, NY April 2009 – May 2010
- Constituency Director, Florida, Obama for America, Tampa, FL, July 2008 – December 2008
- Consultant, SEIU Local 1199, New York, NY, February 2008 – June 2008
- Chief of Staff, Office of New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, January 2007 – September 2007

- Regional Director, Office of State Senate Democratic Leader, David A. Paterson, New York, NY, December 2003 – December 2006
- Deputy Field Director, Friends of Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, October 2006 – November 2006
- Deputy Field Director, John Sabini for State Senate, Queens, NY, August 2006 – September 2006
- Part Time Adjunct Lecturer, PACE University, New York, NY, September 2005 – Present
- Field Director, Bronx, New Yorkers for Ferrer 2005, Bronx, NY, October 2005 – November 2005
- Campaign Manager, People for Melissa Mark-Viverito 2005, New York, NY, August 2005 – September 2005
- Deputy Field Director, Friends of Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, October 2004 – November 2004
- Deputy Field Director, Serrano for State Senate, New York, NY, July 2004 – September 2004
- VP, Campaign Services, The PoliProd Group, Brooklyn, NY, May 2003 – January 2004
- Conference Consultant, PACE University, New York, NY, September 2003 – January 2004.
- Campaign Manager, Friends of Philip Reed, New York, NY, June 2003 – November 2003

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU’s Local Candidates Committee? YES 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 NO



Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: 7/8/14

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

Board of Elections, and address information is updated automatically?	
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?	Support*/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?	Support/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?	Support/Oppose
14. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support/Oppose
15. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support/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.)	Support/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?	Support/Oppose
18. What is your position on requiring candidates to include the full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
20. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support/Oppose
21. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
30. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
32. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	Support/Oppose
33. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose
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?	Support/Oppose

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.

As it relates to Question 1: Since I was elected I have supported a complete overhaul of the redistricting process, ensuring that it is completely independent from the political process. I have said time and again that the people should choose their representatives, not vice versa. I could not support the constitutional amendment because I believe it did not go far enough in creating a truly independent redistricting commission. The fail safe in the adopted process reverts back to the political branches of government – and in that sense is not independent. While I respect Citizen Union's support for the constitutional amendment, I would like to see us go further.

As it relates to question 2 under campaign reform, I understand the concerns with the two-party system and agree with many of the goals of Citizens Union to ensure that the "duopolistic" nature of the party system is dismantled. This is one of the reasons why I proudly sought and received the endorsement of the Working Families Party, and why I have supported candidates running on the WFP line. It has inserted "competition" into the party system in New York, and I think it has given progressive candidates such as myself the opportunity to win elections.

The problem I have with doing away with partisan elections is that, for better or worse, right now political parties are the only way to mobilize voters who do not have the resources to mobilize themselves. The citizens I represent in the Bronx, who do not have the time or money to become involved in politics, would be hurt by nonpartisan elections. Absent campaign finance reform and the FULL public financing of campaigns, it would further lead to wealthy individuals influencing campaigns. It is unconscionable to me, for instance, that an individual can spend nearly a quarter billion dollars of his own money to win election for

mayor three times. Nonpartisan elections would do nothing to curb that problem, and would do nothing to mobilize the poorest voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

As it relates to question 11: I support making the primary date the same for all elections, saving us taxpayer money. However as a state legislator now for four years who travels up to Albany sometimes 4-6 days a week, I have found that making contact with the residents of my district during legislative session is difficult. Holding elections during legislative session makes it even more difficult for a representative do his/her job while at the same time meeting voters. I am not sure two weeks is enough time after session. Maybe the solution is to end legislative session earlier or later, and change the fiscal year in the process, which would alter the demands of legislative session vis-à-vis campaign season. We should be able to find a compromise between cost efficient elections and the demands of government.

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

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

As an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- a. 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
- b. what are the top five promises you are making to the voters during this campaign?

We thank you very much for your response. Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient.

TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES FROM LAST ELECTION AND ACTION ON THEM

Each year I have run I have said I do not make campaign promises but rather commitments to my constituents. In 2012, these were my commitments:

1. **Public Safety in the 33rd District** - we have to do all we can to get illegal guns off the street and stop gun violence, while also ensuring that community members feel the police is there to protect them and their families. That means doing away with programs like Stop and Frisk, which I believe is unconstitutional, and it means ensuring that immigrants in the Bronx are not afraid to approach law enforcement for fear of getting caught up in deportation proceedings.

I have worked with the local precincts, community organizations, and the new leadership at City Hall to keep our neighborhoods safe. We have ended stop and frisk, we have held Know Your Rights forums on civil liberties, and we were able to secure state funding for a program in the Bronx to reduce gun violence called SNUG.

2. **Criminal Justice Reform** – as the Ranking Member on the Crimes, Crime Victims, and Corrections Committee during the first two years of my tenure, it was my job to help oversee the corrections system, to ensure victims are protected, help those who have been wrongfully accused, and to give those returning from prison the opportunities they need to be productive citizens.

I passed the Charitable Bail Law which allows those arrested for misdemeanors but who cannot post bail to be assisted through a third party nonprofit organization. I have worked with the governor on limiting the harmful effects of Secure Communities. We have finally secured the transfer of the Futon Facility to

the Osborne Association, and have put in place the institutional support to make it the most unique reentry facility for those returning from prison in the country.

3. **Community and Economic Development** – While unemployment has decreased in the Bronx, it is still the highest in the city and near the highest in the state. We need to do more to promote responsible economic and community development. I support the governor's efforts to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in the Regional Economic Councils and think we can do more. At the center of that effort in my district is the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory, which has the potential to revitalize my neighborhood and provide hundreds of living wage jobs for my neighbors.

I am proud to say that the Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment project has been achieved in my last term. The Kingsbridge National Ice Center will open in 2017, bringing responsible economic development and vitality to my community.

4. **Health Care** – the Bronx continues to be the unhealthiest county in the State. This is why I launched the Bronx CAN health initiative and will continue to work with community partners like Montefiore Medical Center and Bronx Health Reach to ensure that my community gets access to healthy foods, preventive care, and the best possible health coverage we can provide. As a member of the Health Committee in the State Senate, I will continue to propose legislation that will improve the health of the Bronxites I serve.

Bronx CAN is now in its fourth year and we have helped hundreds of our residents take ownership of their health through our health fairs and other programming.

5. **Education** – I continue to be an educator and believe it is still the Great Equalizer in our society. It is the main engine of upward mobility, especially in a District such as mine which has higher levels of poverty and lower high school graduation rates than just about anywhere in the state. Education is important for everyone – but it is more vital in my community than ever. I will continue to work on educating our youth, reforming the education system in terms of curriculum, and providing our teachers the resources they need to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

I am proud to have been part of the effort to add more than \$1 billion in state funds to education this year and to have brought universal Pre-K to New York City.

TOP FIVE 2014 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

Five Commitments to Voters 2014:

1. Increase the minimum wage in New York State and New York City.
2. Public Financing of campaigns.
3. Pass the Dream Act.
4. See the continued implementation of ACA in the Bronx and the rest of New York City, and continue to work on improving the health outcomes of my constituents – hopefully as Chair of the Health Committee once the Senate reconvenes in January.
5. Continue a record of workforce and economic development.

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.