



2012 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR  
CANDIDATES FOR NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE DISTRICT 27 SPECIAL ELECTION

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Citizens Union would appreciate your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing the State of New York and our interest in reforming state government. Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union will use to evaluate candidates who are running for office in order to determine our “Endorsed Candidate” for the special election for Senate District 27. If you seek our support, we would also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

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.

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Candidate Name: Lewis A. Fidler Age: 55

Campaign Address: 2952 Avenue R, Brooklyn, NY 11229

Campaign Telephone Number: 718-758-4477

Party Affiliation(s): Democratic Campaign Manager Name: Kalman Yeger

Website & Email: [www.lewfidler.com](http://www.lewfidler.com) [kyeger@lewfidler.com](mailto:kyeger@lewfidler.com)

Education: SUNY Albany, B.A., 1975; NYU School of Law, J.D., 1978

Occupation/Employer (or years in currently held elected office):

attorney; Member of the City Council, 2002-present

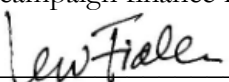
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

Candidate for City Council (2009, 2005, 2003, 2001, 1985); Democratic State Committeeman (1994-present);

Community Board Chair; vice-president of local development corporation.

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU’s Local Candidates Committee? YES  
(Please note: Citizens Union can grant its “Endorsed Candidate” rating only to candidates we have interviewed.)

Have you completed requisite campaign finance filings? YES

Signature of Candidate:  Date: March 6, 2012

# 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 establishing by statute or constitutional amendment an independent redistricting commission charged with drawing congressional and state legislative lines, using set guidelines and adhering to deadlines for release of plans and collection of public input, removing the responsibility from the Legislature?	Support
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 two-party system of governance and operation?	Support
3. What is your position on making it easier for candidates to appear on the ballot by, for example, lowering signature requirements and utilizing less burdensome witness signature requirements?	Support
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
5. What is your position on automatically granting New Yorkers on parole the ability to vote?	Oppose
6. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for Election Day Registration?	Support
7. What is your position on amending the constitution to allow for no-excuse absentee voting?	Support
8. What is your position on instituting early voting in New York State to allow voters to cast their votes at more convenient times?	Oppose
9. What is your position on redesigning the ballot to ensure that voters are able to clearly read candidates’ names, titles of offices, designations and ballot questions; that instructions are clear and accurate; and that the ballot is able to split candidates between multiple pages, if necessary, such as in A.7492-A?	Support
10. What is your position on reforming the special election process, creating a nonpartisan special election for state legislative vacancies, as proposed by A.1369/S.26?	Support

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

11. What is your position on lowering campaign contribution limits for legislative and statewide candidates for public office?	Support
12. 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
13. What is your position on restricting campaign contributions from registered lobbyists, placement agents and those who do business with the state?	Support
14. What is your position on banning campaign contributions from corporations, LLCs, and LLPs? (Note: such entities would be able to form separate political action committees due to constitutional issues regarding freedom of speech.)	Support
15. 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

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM (CONTINUED)**

16. What is your position on requiring candidates to include full name, home address, and employer/business name for each contribution and bundler?	Support
17. 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
18. What is your position on stricter requirements on the use of campaign contributions for non-campaign related activity, such as personal use?	Support
19. What is your position on improving disclosure of independent expenditures such as requiring disclosure of electioneering activities?	Support
20. What is your position on limiting the ability of candidates to accumulate “war chests” by transferring funds raised in one race to another?	Support

**ETHICS REFORM**

21. What is your position on empowering the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases involving public corruption, including serious election law malfeasance?	Support
22. 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, building on the 2011 ethics reforms which only apply to future state employees?	Support

**BUDGET REFORM**

23. 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
24. 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
25. What is your position on the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) rather than cash accounting for the state budget?	Oppose
26. What is your position on distributing member item allocations equally among all legislators and requiring for greater accountability as expressed in S. 7007/A10116?	Support
27. What is your position on incorporating the use of performance budgeting and outcome measurement to promote the more rational appropriation of state funds?	Support
28. What is your position on instituting a later start date for the state fiscal year?	Oppose
29. 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

**ADDITIONAL REFORM**

30. What is your position on a merit-based appointment system through creation of a commission for the selection of all New York’s judges?	Oppose
31. What is your position simplifying and modernizing the state’s court system by consolidating the nine trial courts into a two-tiered system?	Support
32. What is your position on increasing public access to information by reforming the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws to ensure sufficient transparency of state government, as well as the creation of tools such as open data portals to ease public access to information?	Support
33. 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

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.

1. I believe that the redistricting process is an absolute abomination to democracy, and I wholeheartedly agree with Gov. Cuomo that any maps which do not come from an independent process should be vetoed. I have urged the Governor to do so. While I believe a constitutional amendment is necessary to ensure future independent redistricting, an amendment will not resolve the present redistricting crisis.
11. I agree that contribution limits for state offices are far too high, and I would support legislation to reduce contribution limits similar to the limits for New York City offices.
12. I have participated in public financing as a candidate for City Council, and I would support a similar system for state offices, with the understanding that during harsh budget times, a similar program might be difficult to enact. However, public financing is an achievable goal, and must be pursued.
13. I would support a reduced contribution limit for those doing business with the State, similar to that enacted for New York City offices.
14. As a Member of the City Council, I voted for the 2007 legislation banning contributions from LLCs and partnerships. I would support similar legislation for state offices, and include corporations, to the extent this is constitutionally permissible. If that is not attainable, I would support legislation requiring that LLC and partnership contributions be attributed to the members/partners and that such attribution similarly reduce the amount the members/partners could contribute, either individually or through other entities. A similar system for LLC and partnership contributions was in place for New York City prior to the 2007 amendments to the Campaign Finance Act, and is a perfectly appropriate method to limit contribution loopholes.
15. I absolutely support closing soft money loopholes and limitless transfers from party committees to candidates. I face an opponent who has received many tens of thousands of dollars in spending by his party's committees, both in direct spending and transfers. I would support legislation to end that practice.
25. I believe cash accounting is a more accurate method of budgeting and accounting, but I would be open to hearing why GAAP makes more sense.
26. I support a completely transparent and accountable system of member item allocations.
28. While I understand a desire to delay the adoption of a State budget until a more accurate read of tax revenues is available, I oppose a later start date because I believe the State's budget needs to be in place before municipalities adopt their budgets by June 30th. A later State budget leaves too much uncertainty for municipalities which rely on the State's budget for their own budget planning.

## **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 currently holds an office other than the one for which you are running,

- a. what were the top five promises or goals 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 or goals 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 OR GOALS FROM 2009 AND ACTION ON THEM**

In every election, I've always made the same two promises: I will work hard every day so that people have faith that their government is working for them, and that I will always tell the truth. I believe I have kept my word.

### **TOP FIVE 2012 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS**

In this election, my promise is more, because I have an obligation to restore my community's faith in their government. My community has rightfully been disappointed in the service we've received from some of our elected officials. My promise to my community is that I will work hard every day to restore the people's faith in their government. And I'll never, ever lie to my community.

**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 [rfauss@citizensunion.org](mailto:rfauss@citizensunion.org)**