



## Responsible New York 2008 Questionnaire

1 Fishers Road, Pittsford, New York 14534 :: Telephone: (585) 419-9980 Fax: (585) 340-1202

Candidate's Name:

I am a registered

Are you an incumbent      Yes      No

I am a candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ District

Are you running in a Primary?      Yes      No

If you are running in a Primary, which party's?      Dem      Rep      Ind      Con      Wor

In addition to running in the party you are registered which additional party nomination you will have:

Democrat      Republican      Independence      Conservative      Working Families

### INSTRUCTIONS

It would be preferable that you [download your questionnaire from our website](#) and email back your answers. Simply save the PDF to your computer, type in your answers, and email the PDF back as an attachment to: [info@ResponsibleNewYork.com](mailto:info@ResponsibleNewYork.com). Text boxes for long answers will accommodate as much text as required. Long answers can also be pasted from MS Word if more convenient. Please feel free to send any supporting campaign information, photos, etc. that would aid us in our selection process. Please return your completed questionnaire, either via the internet or by mail, no later than August 20, 2008.

Thank you for participating in our selection process. This questionnaire will not be the sole determining factor in our selection. We will also consider your background and character and the viability of your race in our determination. Additionally, if you are an incumbent we will include your past voting record and campaigns as factors.

**Important Disclaimer:** Your questionnaire and its answers, as well as any supporting campaign documents, will become the possession of Responsible New York and may be used as we deem appropriate.

*Responsible New York is an advocate for:*

1. Responsible State Budgeting
2. Real Estate Tax Reform
3. Election and Campaign Finance Reform (including redistricting)
4. True Government Transparency
5. An End to Unfunded Mandates
6. Equitable Distribution of Economic Development Resources
7. Government Employee Compensation & Pensions Consistent with Private Sector
8. An End to Back-Door Borrowing and Reining in Authorities



### QUESTION 1

Rank the eight issues below in order of their importance based upon your beliefs with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important.

\_\_\_ Responsible State Budgeting

\_\_\_ Real Estate Tax Reform

\_\_\_ Election and Campaign Finance Reform (including redistricting)

\_\_\_ True Government Transparency

\_\_\_ An End to Unfunded Mandates

\_\_\_ Equitable Distribution of Economic Development Resources

\_\_\_ Government Employee Compensation and Pensions Consistent with the Private Sector

\_\_\_ An End to Back-Door Borrowing and Reining in Authorities

#### Responsible State Budgeting

### QUESTION 2

The New York State Budget has consistently grown at twice the rate of inflation even though the population has remained stagnant.

Do you feel our government has been responsible in their fiduciary position to the taxpayers of New York?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 3

Do you understand zero-based budgeting?    Yes    No    Unsure

If so, do you think the state should adopt zero-based budgeting methods of accounting and disclosure?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 4

If you take all the taxes paid in New York collectively (state income tax, real estate taxes, sales taxes, gasoline tax, etc) we are the highest taxed per capita state in the nation. Are we receiving the appropriate value for this level of taxation?

Yes    No    Unsure

If not, what is your plan to lower our tax burden? *(The text box below allows for as much content as required.)*



### QUESTION 5

Since our New York State Thruway bonds were paid off many years ago would you support abolishing the Thruway tolls?    Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 6

Do you believe our legislators have direct input in the state budget process?    Yes    No    Unsure

If no, is it truly “A three-men in a room scenario”?    Yes    No    Unsure

## REAL ESTATE TAX REFORM

### QUESTION 7

Do you feel the current method of real property tax assessment is fair and equitable?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 8

Do you feel the high rate of real property taxes, including school taxes, are hurting real property market values?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 9

Real property values in upstate New York have remained stagnate for years. Do you feel that the high cost of real property taxes, including school taxes, is the main reason?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 10

Do you feel that certain areas, like New York City, should have any real estate property tax exemptions or reductions?

Yes    No    Unsure

## ELECTION AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE (including redistricting)

### QUESTION 11

Which would you support? (check only one )

An independent commission to redraw legislative district lines?

The legislature drawing the legislative district lines?

### QUESTION 12

Do you believe “special-interests” have diminished Albany’s ability to affect real reform?

Yes    No    Unsure



If yes, would you support legislation to minimize or eliminate this influence?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 13

Do you support any form of public financing of campaigns?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 14

Do you support legislation that would support easier ballot access and voter registration?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 15

Would you support passing a constitutional amendment that would give New Yorkers a more direct role in the legislative process by empowering them to enact and amend laws through initiative and referendum?

Yes No Unsure

## TRUE GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

### QUESTION 16

Would you support a C-Span style network featuring independent content and programming focused on New York State government?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 17

Would you support legislation that would strengthen and streamline our Freedom of Information Laws (FOIL)?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 18

Do you believe the State Budget should be available to the public a reasonable amount of time before there is a legislative vote?

Yes No Unsure

## AN END TO UNFUNDED MANDATES

### QUESTION 19

Do you believe the state has created undue financial hardships on local governments because of unfunded mandates?

Yes No Unsure



### QUESTION 20

Would you advocate reduction of the Medicaid benefit to reduce the county tax burden?

Yes No Unsure

### EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

### QUESTION 21

Do you believe New York's economic development resources are distributed equitably by population?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 22

Do you think there is appropriate accountability from the organizations receiving economic development resources?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 23

Do you think the Speaker, Majority Leader and Governor should control close to a billion dollar "slush fund" for pork barrel spending?

Yes No Unsure

### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION & PENSION CONSISTENT WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

### QUESTION 24

Do you believe that public employee wages are disproportionately higher compared to the private sectors'?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 25

Do you believe that public employee fringe benefits are disproportionately higher compared the private sectors?

Yes No Unsure

### QUESTION 26

Six out of the ten largest PACs are public employee unions. Do you think they have too much of an impact on our state government?

Yes No Unsure



## AN END TO BACK-DOOR BORROWING/ REINING IN AUTHORITIES

### QUESTION 27

Do you think “Back-Door Borrowing” through “Authorities” circumvents the spirit of the New York State Constitution as it applies to debt?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 28

Do you think long-term debt is an appropriate way to finance current operating budget deficits?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 29

Given that New York State has the highest level of debt in the nation, do you think our state should have a plan to systematically reduce its high level of debt?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 30

Do you think that our state “Authorities” should have the same level of transparency and accountability as the rest of the state government?

Yes    No    Unsure

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### QUESTION 31

Take one of the eight issues listed above that you feel is the most important and tell us how you would solve the problem if elected.

### QUESTION 32

What do you see as the most important challenge facing New York’s general public? (Not government or government workers or the wealthy/poor, but all New Yorkers)



### QUESTION 33

New York's Legislature has been described as the most "dysfunctional in America" (Brennan Center Report). Do you agree?

Yes    No    Unsure

If you agree, what do you think makes it dysfunctional and how do you propose resolving it?

### QUESTION 34

Tom Golisano has said, "Responsible New York's objectives are not to help the few, but to help the many." This belief is strongly held by Tom Golisano and this organization. As a state legislator would you vote for legislation that is not supported by your party or your party leaders'?

Yes    No    Unsure

### QUESTION 35

**IMPORTANT:** This last question may be answered in writing, however, it would be preferable if you would send us a short ( 2 or 3 minute ) VIDEO answering the question.

This video will aid us in our selection process, as it may be hard to interview every candidate in person.

Responsible New York is very concerned about the lack of accountability in our elected officials. During the campaign season many politicians will say anything for an endorsement, contribution or nomination. What do you think would be the most effective way to keep elected officials accountable after the election?

Please save and email this PFD back as an attachment to: [info@ResponsibleNewYork.com](mailto:info@ResponsibleNewYork.com).

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** *By printing your name in the text field above, you are certifying that the information you have provided is true and correct and that you are the Candidate whose name appears on page 1 of this document.*

Please return no later than August 20, 2008

If you are mailing the questionnaire back please address it to:

**Responsible New York**  
1 Fishers Road  
Pittsford, New York 14534