

## Albany Times Union Questionnaire

Q: What specific actions would you take to rein in the size and cost of state government?

A: **“Big government” is not the problem. Bad government is the problem. Government that favors corporate special interests over average working people is the problem. With consumer demand and business investment depressed by record level private sector debts, we need more government spending to increase demand and get the economy moving again. That said, I would cut corporate welfare and cap the salaries of managers at three times the average wage (\$40,000/year) of state employees. We need more line workers, fewer managers. I would cut contracting out for services; state workers are more cost effective. We must reform the public authorities that evade constitutional public debt limits with a mix of elimination, consolidation, and democratization. I would also enact a state single payer health care system. A recent report by New York State found this would reduce overall health care costs in NYS by \$28 billion a year compared to the individual mandate program Congress recently enacted.**

Q: What are your specific proposals to address the recent spate of high-profile ethics scandals involving elected officials?

A: **More disclosure and transparency for lobbying and campaign finance. Eliminate legislative leader's patronage funds: no member items and equal staff and resources for every state legislator. Democratize legislative rules to empower committees and rank-and-file legislators. Make open meeting laws apply to the state legislature. Public campaign financing. Nonpartisan independent redistricting for multi-member districts for proportional representation. Proportional representation to replace the two-party corporate state with a multi-party democracy.**

Q: What are your top three strategies to reduce real property taxes?

A: **(1) Progressive tax reforms that make the rich pay their fair and proper share, including a stop to the \$16 billion Stock Transfer Tax rebate to Wall Street, a Bankers' Bonus Tax, and a more progressive personal income tax. These reforms would enable the state budget to fulfill the State Finance Law requirement to share 8% of state revenues with local governments, relieving local dependence on property taxes without cutting state or local spending on schools, health care, infrastructure, the environment, or other essential functions. (2) Enact single payer health care and remove Medicaid, the counties' biggest expense, often over 50%, from county budgets. (3) Increase state aid to property-poor school districts in accordance with the court decisions in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case, while targeting aid to reduce property taxes for seniors and other low and moderate income households through an expanded property tax circuit breaker.**

Q: Do you support a constitutional convention to address New York's systemic problems? If so, what issues would you place at the top of its agenda?

A: **I do not support a constitutional convention until we have fair elections of its delegates. For that we need public campaign financing and proportional representation. Top agenda items for a constitutional convention would be an Equal Rights Amendment, tuition-free SUNY, and the right to a job at a living wage with government as the employer of last resort.**

Q: Do you support same-sex marriage?

A: **Yes. 1,138 rights and responsibilities from the federal government and another 700 rights and responsibilities from New York government are bestowed on partners in civil marriage. These rights and responsibilities include health insurance coverage, medical decision-making authority for a spouse, inheritance rights, divorce, child adoption, pensions, and death benefits. Same-sex partners should have these rights just as opposite-sex partners do.**