

# 2010 Candidate Survey

**User:** (Registered) Russo, Andrew / **Email:** andrewcrusso@gmail.com / **Phone:**  
**Survey answered on:** 10/23/2010 5:15:06 PM

- 1. Candidate for (check the one that applies.) (answer type: multiple options with single answer)**  
Answer: selected option = New York State Senate 49th District
- 2. Candidate Name (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: Andrew C. Russo
- 3. Campaign Name and Address (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: Reformers for Russo, 6449 River Birchfield Rd, Jamesville, NY, 13078
- 4. Campaign office phone number (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: 315-663-4204
- 5. Campaign FAX Number (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: n/a
- 6. Campaign email (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: brian@russofornysenate.com
- 7. Educational Background: (answer type: long text)**  
Answer: BM (1997) and MM (1998) from The Juilliard School
- 8. Occupation: (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: Financial Representative - Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
- 9. Work History: (answer type: long text)**  
Answer: Self-employed concert pianist and recording artist  
Executive Director - Music Journeys, Inc.  
Professor - Butler University  
Director of Music - Le Moyne College  
Financial Representative - Northwestern Mutual
- 10. Community Involvement: (answer type: long text)**  
Answer: Recipient of 2003 Post Award for community service. Directed non-profit foundation Music Journeys from 2001 - 2009. Administrated and performed educational services in the Syracuse City School District. Active volunteer with a broad array of local charities.
- 11. What is your top legislative policy priority for 2011? (answer type: short text)**  
Answer: Thoughtful and compassionate Medicaid Reform
- 12. What are two specific actions you would take to address next year's anticipated state budget deficit? (answer type: long text)**  
Answer: We must work in intelligent and thoughtful ways to reduce the cost burden of Medicaid and to pursue efficiencies and consolidations within the state agency and public authority systems. These two actions will result in recurring savings, which is what we need in order to bring the spending side of our

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budget down to a sustainable level.

**13. What are your top two recommendations to improve the climate for economic development in our region? (answer type: long text)**

Answer: It's all about taxes and regulations. By shaving billions out of next year's expenditures through the actions outlined above, we can certainly lower property taxes and possibly income taxes for all New Yorkers. I also would propose a moratorium on all new regulations. We must form a commission to do a cost-benefit analysis of the current regulatory structure so that we can repeal or reduce the costliest and least effective.

**14. What specific efforts would you support to control the growth of state spending in 2011? (answer type: long text)**

Answer: I would refer again to my answer for question 12. My plans for addressing the state budget deficit are all about reductions on the spending side, not tax increases or new taxes. Raising taxes has been proven to not solve the underlying problems in our budget. The Democratic majority proved that to us over the last two budget years. It's time for a different approach.

**15. What steps would you take to reduce the cost of public employee benefits to better align them with those of private sector employees? Will you support a Tier VI with defined benefit contributions? (answer type: long text)**

Answer: I will support a Tier VI with defined contributions. We already have a great example of this in the SUNY system. A portable defined contribution plan makes sense. It will promote financial literacy and ease the cost burden on tax payers. The Comptroller must also reduce both the discount rate and fund performance rate to 5% and take a larger fixed income position. Pension benefits are constitutionally guaranteed, meaning all New York taxpayers are on the hook for underperformance of the pension fund. We have been paying higher taxes each of the last 6 or 7 years because of this. So we need to be honest about what market conditions will actually produce moving forward. There is currently a huge unfunded liability in the pension fund that we are all on the hook for. It will take more than a decade of sound management to ease the pension fund towards actual solvency without causing spikes in local taxes. We must address this as soon as possible.

**16. What steps would you support to increase the competitiveness of New York State's small businesses? (answer type: long text)**

Answer: I would like us to lower the corporate franchise tax in 2011, and pursue lower corporate and personal income tax levels through meaningful reductions on the spending side of our State budget. In addition, the regulation moratorium that I am proposing would create optimism for further cost savings as burdensome regulations are eventually altered or eliminated.

**17. What specific policies or legislation would you sponsor or support in 2011 to encourage or implement government modernization at the state, regional and local levels? (answer type: long text)**

Answer: Term limits. We can't expect a modern government without allowing for fresh voices to come into the mix, bringing the ideas of multiple generations and points of view together. This is why I believe firmly in term limits and will sponsor a bill increasing legislative terms to 4 years and limiting all State office holders (both legislative and statewide offices) to two terms. In conjunction with that, I would pursue changing the budget process to two-year or four-year budgeting

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in odd years (non-election years). The current year to year system is inefficient, outdated and causes more problems than it solves. We can't expect creative solutions to our common problems unless our budget process forces us to consider the long-term cost implications of our annual decisions. And by budgeting in non-election years, we can hopefully depoliticize the process a bit as well.

**18. If elected, at the end of 2011, what would you like to point to as your most important legislative or budget related accomplishment for the year? (answer type: short text)**

Answer: Having participated in meaningful Medicaid Reform