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CITIZENS UNION ANNOUNCES CANDIDATE PREFERENCES IN SEPTEMBER 2016 PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Issues Preference for 4 Incumbents, 2 Challengers, 5 Open Seat Candidates and 4 No Preferences

Citizens Union Chair Peter Sherwin and Executive Director Dick Dadey today announced Citizens Union's candidate preferences in 15 "competitive" state Senate and Assembly races for the September 13th Primary Election.

As a nonpartisan government watchdog organization dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers, Citizens Union evaluates candidates based on their commitment to our reform agenda and their effectiveness in advancing these issues, as well as other issues affecting their communities and in their ability to represent their entire district. In alignment with Citizens Union's top priorities, candidates were asked about their commitment to a state Constitutional Convention referendum, ethics reform, campaign finance reform, and how they propose to stem and prevent corruption in Albany.

"When New Yorkers who are members of a political party turn out to vote on Primary Day, they will find either no contest for state legislature and if there is one, it is often not very competitive. The incumbent re-election rate will remain high again this season as there are

even fewer contests for open and vacant seats in New York City, of which there are only seven. But we are pleased to provide some guidance to those New Yorkers who live in districts where there are real contests. We have supported those who we believe will fight against corruption and for democratic reform, and are proud of those who have earned Citizens Union's preference," said Dick Dadey, Executive Director, Citizens Union.

In total Citizens Union preferred 4 Democratic incumbents, citing their effectiveness in Albany and commitment to reform, including Luis Sepúlveda (Assembly District 87 in the Bronx), Gustavo Rivera (Senate District 33 in the Bronx), Guillermo Linares (Assembly District 72 in Manhattan), and James Sanders, Jr. (Senate District 10 in Queens). All four candidates have proven to be effective advocates for reform and for their communities.

Citizens Union issued preferences for 2 challengers to incumbents. In the lower Manhattan Assembly District 65 race, a seat once held by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, there is a spirited primary campaign underway with multiple strong and capable candidates. Jenifer Rajkumar was preferred over four-month old incumbent, Alice Cancel, because of her detailed understanding of reform issues and her presumed viability having won district wide for a party post. Janine Materna was preferred over incumbent Ron Castorina, Jr. in the Republican contest for the Staten Island Assembly District 62 because she was more closely aligned with Citizens Union's reform goals and presented herself as having a stronger grasp of and commitment to democratic reform.

In open seats, Citizens Union preferred Jamaal Bailey in the open seat for Senate District 36 in Queens, Robert Carroll in the open Brooklyn seat for Assembly District 44, Tremaine Wright in the open seat for Assembly District 56 in Brooklyn, Micah Lasher in the open western Manhattan seat for Senate District 31, and Nantasha Williams in the open seat for Assembly District 33 in Queens. A full list of our preference is at the end of this release.

Of the 4 races where Citizens Union did not prefer a candidate, in some instances it was because we were unable to interview all candidates, in others it was because we could not select between two qualified candidates. In separate past elections for Senate District 16, both Toby Stavisky and S.J. Jung have been preferred by Citizens Union. We have decided this year that both would be strong and capable representatives for their districts and for reform issues.

What is increasingly discouraging for New Yorkers is the number of non-competitive races. The worst example this year is the Assembly District 70 open seat where 24-year incumbent Keith Wright is not running for re-election. Unlike the lower Manhattan Assembly contest where there are six viable candidates running, there ended up being only one candidate for the Democratic nomination resulting in no primary contest. The Democratic nominee Inez Dickens will face token opposition in the November general election. Voters will essentially be voting to confirm her appointment as there is really no competitive election. It is disheartening when a seat like this becomes available, and there is not a competitive primary election to choose the party's nominee.

Including races involving incumbents, this year 14 Senate and 37 Assembly races are uncontested for a total of 51 seats out of the 91 seats in the NYS Legislature (the State Senate and Assembly combined) representing New York City residents. That means that 56% of all of NYC's seats in the State Legislature are held by incumbents who do not face any competition in their parties.

Of the 15 races evaluated for Senate and Assembly seats, CU issued a preference for 11 races and in 4 gave no preference. In order to be eligible to receive a preference, candidates were required to fill out questionnaires and attend interviews, and all candidates in each district were given the opportunity to participate.

Bronx

Senate District 33	Gustavo Rivera , incumbent, preferred
Senate District 36	Jamaal Bailey , preferred for the vacant seat
Assembly District 84	No preference
Assembly District 87	Luis Sepúlveda , incumbent, preferred

Brooklyn

Senate District 19	No preference
Assembly District 44	Robert Carroll , preferred for the open seat
Assembly District 46	No preference
Assembly District 56	Tremaine Wright , preferred for the open seat

Manhattan

Senate District 31

Assembly District 65

Assembly District 72

Micah Lasher, preferred for the open seat

Jennifer Rajkumar, challenger, preferred

Guillermo Linares, incumbent, preferred

Queens

Senate District 10

Senate District 16

Assembly District 33

James Sanders, Jr. incumbent, preferred

No preference

Nantasha Williams, preferred for the vacant seat

Staten Island

Assembly District 62

Janine Materna, challenger, preferred
