

## Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate,

In the following pages, you will find questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office, and to issue our preference for the June primary. Read more about the method, principles, and criteria of the candidate evaluation process [here](#).

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If you seek our support, we will need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

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If you cannot complete the questionnaire in one sitting, you can click Save at the bottom of every page.

Once you submit the questionnaire, you will receive a confirmation email with your responses. Citizens Union will not be able to see your answers unless you submit the form. We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).

For any questions, please email [candidates@citizensunion.org](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)

We thank you very much for your response.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name

Harry J Wilson

### Running in which primary

Republican

### What party line/s are you running under?

Republican

### Age

50

### Education

Harvard University, Harvard Business school

### Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Ran for State Comptroller in 2010

### Website

[harrywilsonforgovernor.com](http://harrywilsonforgovernor.com)

## Twitter

@harrywilsonny

## Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WilsonforNewYork>

# Affirmations

**Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?**

Yes

**Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?**

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union preferences and endorsements)

## Signature



# ETHICS

**Please elaborate below on your agenda to improve ethics in New York state government. What do you see as the main flaws in the current system? What policies would you implement to correct those flaws? What actions you plan to take to advance your positions on ethics issues.**

On March 11, in our first policy announcement of day 18 of our campaign, we unveiled our government reform agenda. We started there because we believe proper governance and ethics reform are foundational for a Turnaround Plan for New York.

In the plan, we focus on improving the quality of people in public life by expanding access to elected office for candidates and parties and by substantially improving accountability for public officials. Highlights of the plan include:

- Independent redistricting.
- Easier ballot access for candidates and parties (lower signature requirements or modest

filing fees)

- Open primaries
- Campaign finance reform, particularly stricter enforcement of the LLC loophole.
- Election integrity, including voting roll audits, voting for citizens only, and voter ID requirements
- Ranked choice voting
- Eight-year term limits for all statewide elected officials, and 12-year term limits for other state legislators.
- Initiative, referendum, and recall provisions.
- Penalties for FOIL non-compliance and late compliance

A new ethics body of professional, nonpartisan ethics professionals appointed by outside groups, not elected officials

**What experience have you had, if any, with ethics reform? If you have worked to advance this issue (as a lawmaker, public official, professional, or a private citizen) we would like to hear about it.**

I have been an advocate for honest, transparent, and stakeholder-focused governance for my entire professional career. In the corporate world, I have restructured many businesses that failed to follow this approach (prior to my arrival) and instituted a culture of transparency and good governance from the board of directors and senior management on down. I have also pursued this in the public sector, as a candidate in 2010 and as an advocate in the years since. As I have often said, companies and governments get into trouble when the culture deviates from transparency and a focus on delivering for core stakeholders, and we start first with appropriate rules, followed by both mechanisms for accountability and a culture of accountability, and then we need to select people who embrace that approach (and mechanisms to remove them if they prove to not follow it).

## **Ethics Oversight**

**Do you support replacing Joint Commission on Public Ethics with an effective and independent enforcement body, whose members are not appointed directly by elected officials?**

Yes

**Do you support the new independent ethics oversight agency to also replace the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC)?**

No

**Do you support allowing the new ethics body to investigate misconduct more effectively by simplifying its voting rules to allow for majority vote in making decisions, giving it the authority to subpoena testimony and documents, empowering it to suspend or terminate public officials (not elected officials), and increasing its transparency?**

Yes

**If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.**

Do you support the new independent ethics oversight agency to also replace the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC)?

- I have not reviewed the specifics of the proposed changes. In general, we need 1 ethics body overseen by members appointed by professionals, not elected officials, with the proper staffing and funding to pursue its charter effectively.

## **Preventing corruption**

**Do you support reducing nonspecific lump sum funding in the state budget by publicly posting comprehensive information regarding how they are distributed, enforcing stricter disclosure requirements from the elected officials who award them, and establishing a searchable online database for such appropriations?**

Yes

**Do you support creating a Doing Business Database to track entities and individuals who have been awarded contracts or other economic agreements with the state, similar to the one in use by the NYC government?**

Yes

**Do you support restoring the State Comptroller's authority to review state contracts before they are executed, including procurement audits for SUNY, CUNY, and centralized contracts of the OGS?**

Yes

## **ELECTIONS AND VOTING**

### **Election Administration**

**How would you use your power as a governor to improve election administration in New York?**

We need a nonpartisan election administration system, not a bipartisan patronage system that serves as an incumbent protection mechanism. Professionalizing the BOE with a focus on proper election administration is an important focus. We need to clean up our voting rolls through periodic audits, require a voter ID and ban ballot harvesting, and press for open primaries to give a greater voice to unaffiliated voters.

**What experience have you had, if any, with election reform? If you have worked to advance this issue (as a lawmaker, public official, professional, or a private citizen) we would like to hear about it.**

I have been an advocate of these reforms since my 2010 campaign in which 195,000 votes were discovered three weeks after the election. They would not have affected the outcome, but it is a clear sign of how poorly administered New York State elections are.

**Do you support removing the constitutional requirement in election administration that empowers the two major political parties to nominate and effectively control election boards?**

Yes

**Do you support reducing the party-based hiring in boards of elections to the minimum currently required by the constitution?**

Yes

**Do you support implementing an open, competitive, merit-based hiring process for all election administration staff and certain functions at polls?**

Yes

## **Voting Rights**

**Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact same-day voter registration, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?**

No

**Do you support immediately reducing voter registration deadline to ten days before an election, the minimum allowed in the state constitution?**

Yes

**Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?**

No

**If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.**

Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?

- No, unless it is paired with an effective voter ID system

## **Open and Competitive Elections**

**Do you support easing access to the ballot for parties and independent candidates, by returning to the pre-2020 voting and signature thresholds? That includes reducing the voting threshold to become a registered party back to 50,000 votes in a gubernatorial election, and the petition requirement for independent candidates back to 15,000 signatures.**

Yes

**Do you support reforming the process of filling vacancies in the state legislature by implementing nonpartisan special elections or holding a primary election at least thirty days in advance of the special election?**

Yes

**Who do you think should draw new district maps every decade in New York? (e.g., the current Independent Redistricting Commission, the Legislature/LATFOR, a new body)**

Independent redistricting body that MUST reach a resolution by 1/31 or the maps will be moved automatically to a court-appointed special master.

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

**How would you use your power as a governor to reform the campaign finance system in New York and reduce the role of big money in campaigns?**

I would press for increased disclosure requirements and a full elimination (with penalties for non-compliance) of the LLC loophole.

**What experience have you had, if any, with campaign finance reform? If you have worked to advance this issue (as a lawmaker, public official, professional, or a private citizen) we would like to hear about it.**

I am currently in litigation as one of my primary opponents is violating campaign finance laws by spending general election funds during the primary and engaging in impermissible transfers from other campaign committees. No regulatory body has taken any action, despite a willful disregard by this other campaign for election law. I bring a reformer's zeal and a candidate's experience in addressing these important issues so that New Yorkers can expect honest campaigns that comply with the law.

**Do you support further reducing campaign contribution limits?**

No

**Do you support setting even lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state?**

Yes

**Starting from the next election cycle, New York will have a public campaign finance program, offering matching funds on small donations for candidates who opt in. If you decide to run again in the next election, do you intend to participate in the program?**

No

**Do you support moving the campaign finance matching program to be administered by an independent, nonpartisan body outside of the State Board of Election?**

No

**If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.**

Taxpayer dollars should not go to political campaigns.

## **COURT REFORM**

**Do you support simplifying and consolidating New York State's court system - which includes 11 trial courts - by passing the Chief Judge's proposed constitutional amendment to modernize the courts?**

Yes

## **STATE BUDGET PROCESS**

**What is your view on the balance of power between the Governor and the legislature during the budget process?**

The budget must be much more transparent, we need more accountability on the results of public spending and the fiscal year should move to a 6/30 end to accommodate a more deliberative process.

**How do you view the budget process with respect to timeliness, effectiveness, fairness, and public accountability? What improvements, if any, can be made?**

If the legislature doesn't pass a budget that works by March 31, they will not be paid until they pass it. We will take a start-from-zero approach, as I have done with the companies I have restructured over the years, to work out the best ways to finance the programs New Yorkers need and remove the ones they don't.



## MISCELLANEOUS

**What are the top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected? Feel free to reference an answer above rather than restate it.**

First: Public safety - Violent crime has spiked dramatically in New York. My Making New York Safe plan (available at [www.harrywilsonforgovernor.com](http://www.harrywilsonforgovernor.com)) takes a comprehensive, holistic approach to addressing this statewide problem. I will prioritize safety for all New Yorkers.

Second: I will cut at least \$25 billion in spending from the current state budget next year and return all of those savings to taxpayers, resulting in a 20% cut in income taxes and a 20% cut in property taxes (by relieving local governments of their Medicaid burden in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar reduction in property taxes).

Third: Cleaning up Albany - I will enact our government reform plan, as described above, as a foundational step in turning around our broken state government.

**Other than what you noted above, what experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, government transparency and oversight, police accountability).**

And really #4 – reducing the cost of living by repealing unnecessarily burdensome regulations that drive up the cost of food, energy, and housing.

**What are your current fundraising numbers?**

Over \$13 million, approximately 80% self-funded.

**How many individual donors do you have?**

500-1000 for the non-self-funded portion

**Please indicate any endorsements that your campaign has received, if applicable (you can also share a link to a list of endorsements)**

Unite New York

**What else would you like us to know about yourself?**

Please check out our crime plan:

<https://harrywilsonforgovernor.com/makingnysafe>

/ Also, please check out our extensive interview library:

<https://harrywilsonforgovernor.com/media/>

**Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below. You can submit the questionnaire at the bottom of the preview page by clicking SUBMIT.**

**Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. If you don't see the email, please check your spam box.**

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