

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](#).

**

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

**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name

Kathy Hochul

Running in which primary

Democratic

What party line/s are you running under?

Democratic Party

Age

63

Education

Syracuse University (BA); Catholic University (JD)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Lieutenant Governor of New York (2015-2021)
U.S. House of Representatives (NY-26, 2011-2013)
Erie County Clerk (2007-2011)
Erie Deputy County Clerk (2003-2006)
Hamburg Town Board (1994-2007)

Website

<https://kathyhochul.com>

Twitter

@KathyHochul

Facebook

<https://facebook.com/kathyhochul>

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Hochul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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.

New Yorkers deserve a government that works for and is accountable to the people it serves. From day one, Governor Hochul has committed to restoring New Yorkers' trust in government by improving transparency and increasing accountability. Since taking office, the governor has moved swiftly to implement a number of measures to advance ethics reform in Albany. In her first budget, the governor fulfilled an early promise to replace the broken Joint Commission on Public Ethics with a new, more transparent entity, the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in

Government. She has also made changes to the state's Open Meetings Law to allow for more remote participation, required that domestic partners be disclosed in financial disclosure forms, created a database of state business subsidies to allow the public to track taxpayer incentives to corporations, directed more than 70 executive agencies and public authorities to release public transparency plans, and worked to speed up the FOIL process to get information to members of the public more quickly. If elected to a full term, the governor will continue to advocate for additional ethics reforms, including her proposals to enact term limits and ban outside income for statewide 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.

Please see above.

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)?

Yes

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.

Governor Hochul understands that JCOPE was irreparably broken and failed to earn the public's trust. During this year's budget negotiations, she

worked closely with lawmakers to replace JCOPE with a new ethics agency that will prioritize transparency and integrity, crack down on wrongdoing and ensure compliance and ethical governing throughout the state. The new entity, the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government, will be composed of 11 members whose appointments must be confirmed by an independent review committee made up of the deans from New York law schools. Significantly, the chairman of the commission will no longer be directly appointed by the governor and will instead be nominated by a majority vote of the commission members. Its members are also explicitly barred from making contributions to political action committees and political ads, and its body and votes must operate under the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information laws, among other measures designed to strengthen the Commission's transparency and integrity. Governor Hochul is confident that this new body will be an effective watchdog for the state and will continue working with lawmakers to identify additional avenues for improving ethics in Albany.

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

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

The governor understands that accountability and transparency are key to ensuring that public resources are protected from abuse, waste and fraud. The enacted budget includes several provisions to increase public accountability for state spending, including the creation of a “database of deals,” as mentioned above, containing information about state business subsidies to allow lawmakers and the public to track taxpayer incentives to corporations. The budget also requires an analysis of all current economic development tax incentives; codifies certain reporting practices for MTA capital projects; and allocates nearly \$3 million for the Authorities Budget Office, which has oversight over hundreds of public authorities, among other measures. Governor Hochul will continue working with lawmakers to strengthen independent oversight of state spending to prevent misuse of public funds.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Election Administration

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

Governor Hochul is committed to expanding voting rights in the State of New York by making it easier, not harder, to vote. Republican-led states are fighting to take our country backward and revoke the fundamental right to vote — a stark reminder of what is at stake. As part of her voting rights agenda, the governor has proposed extending the voter registration deadline to within 10 days before Election Day, to ensure more voters can make it to the polls. The Governor’s FY2023 budget includes provisions that make voting-by-mail more accessible and require large colleges and universities to host polling places on campus to make voting easier for students. The governor knows there is more work to do, and she will continue working to ensure voting is accessible for every New Yorker.

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.

Governor Hochul has been involved in electoral

reform efforts since the 1980s, when, as a member of Senator Daniel P. Moynihan's staff, she helped draft legislation related to campaign finance reform. Her passion for advancing gender equality and increasing women's involvement in politics led her to join the League of Women Voters, and as Lieutenant Governor, she was instrumental in using the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage to increase voter registration and participation among women across New York State. As governor, Kathy Hochul has proposed legislation that will establish a state-level voting rights act, which will enhance protections against voter suppression and vote dilution, establish new protections against voter intimidation and deception, and improve language access for voters, among other provisions. She has similarly called on Congress to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act to protect and expand voting rights across the country and here in New York State.

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?

Yes

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?

Yes

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.

No

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?

No

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)

This year's redistricting process demonstrated that the state needs to come up with a new system. In an ideal world, the process should result in a map that Democrats and Republicans agree represents the middle ground, and our current system has not worked out that way. Governor Hochul wants to take a serious look at other states' models and best practices so that New York can build a stronger and more equitable redistricting system.

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?

The Hochul administration will continue to push an agenda that prioritizes fairness and preserves the integrity of our elections.

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.

Governor Hochul has been involved in electoral reform efforts since the 1980s, when, as a member of Senator Daniel P. Moynihan’s staff, she helped draft legislation related to campaign finance reform. Specifically, she helped author the public-financing program for federal elections, which she still supports to this day.

Do you support further reducing campaign contribution limits?

Yes

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?

The Governor is focused on the current cycle.

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.

The Governor believes the State BOE is best positioned to start the initial program, as she included an increased appropriation to do so in this past budget, but she would also be open to the conversation if there is a more appropriate entity to oversee its implementation.

COURT REFORM

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

The Governor supports making the criminal justice system fairer and more efficient while still maintaining strict procedures that protect the public.

STATE BUDGET PROCESS

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

Governor Hochul believes in the importance of working closely with the state legislature to craft a budget that meaningfully addresses the needs of New Yorkers and the challenges facing our state. During this year's negotiation process, the governor was determined to do things differently than in the past and worked hard to set a new tone of collaboration and respect in Albany where people felt heard, not bullied. The governor is proud that the budget she signed reflected the priorities and concerns of both her office and state lawmakers. Most importantly, the budget brought immediate relief to millions of families and small businesses grappling with the pandemic and high inflation, made historic investments in our health care and education systems, advanced key energy and environmental reforms, and set aside significant state reserves for future emergencies. If elected to a full term, Governor Hochul will continue to work closely and collaboratively with her colleagues in the Legislature to craft the right budgets for New York.

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

Please see above.

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 and Gun Violence Prevention: Governor Hochul has emphasized the importance of increasing public safety within New York's communities. Her FY 2023 budget includes meaningful changes to public safety and gun laws to help restore New Yorkers' sense of security while also making our state safer. Governor Hochul is currently leading a consortium of nine Northeastern states that are working together to interdict illegal gun trafficking. She has also pushed for significant investments in pretrial services, cybersecurity, anti-hate crime initiatives, and mental health services.

Second: Affordability: Governor Hochul understands how deeply the affordability crisis has affected New Yorkers. As part of her FY 2023 budget, she focused on easing the burdens of working families across the state by making historic investments in child care and affordable housing, suspending the gas tax, and accelerating tax cuts to put money back in the pockets of middle-class New Yorkers.

Third: Reproductive Rights & Services: For Governor Hochul, the fight to protect a woman's fundamental right to choose is a personal one, and with *Roe v. Wade* likely to be overturned, she will do everything in her power to make New York a safe harbor for those seeking abortion care. Since taking office, Governor Hochul has directed state agencies to coordinate a statewide public information campaign to make New Yorkers aware of their reproductive rights and legal protections, including developing a Patient Bill of Rights; made medication abortions more accessible during telehealth visits; and recently announced that the state would invest \$35 million to support abortion providers. Governor Hochul will ensure that the state of New York is always there for anyone who needs reproductive health care and is committed to keeping abortion safe and legal.

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).

Before she was even sworn in as the 57th governor of New York, Governor Hochul vowed to transform the workplace culture in the Executive Office that for too long had allowed hostility and toxic, unlawful behavior to go unchecked. Governor Hochul strongly believes that sexual harassment and abuse has no place in any workplace. Since day one, she has taken steps to remove those who perpetuated unsafe working conditions in Albany, strengthen workplace protections, and ensure that all state employees understand that inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. She has also signed multiple pieces of legislation that make it easier for employees to report harassment and strengthen protections for reporting

employees from retaliation. The Governor is committed to making her office a place where open communication, respect and collaboration is the norm, and has worked hard to bring this same standard to all of her dealings with state and city leaders across New York.

What are your current fundraising numbers?

\$31.7 million as of May 2022

How many individual donors do you have?

We have accepted contributions from a breadth of individual donors.

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

Governor Hochul has won the endorsements of hundreds of current and former elected New York officials at the local, county, state and federal levels, as well as faith leaders, Democratic clubs and committees, and organizations from all corners of the state, including, but not limited to the following:

AFL-CIO of New York State
Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE)
Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)
Council of Administrators and Supervisors (CAS)
Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)
Uniformed Firefighters Association
Uniformed Fire Officers Association
Hotel Association of New York City
Hotel Trades Council (HTC)
NYS Building & Construction Trades Council
New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association
New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
National Organization for Women of New York (NOW-NY)
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
UNITEHERE! Local 100
United Steelworkers (USW) District 4
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
Buffalo & Niagara County Building & Construction Trades Council
NYS Laborers' Union (LiUNA)
The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA)
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100
32BJ Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

EMILY's List
Eleanor's Legacy
Democratic Governors Association
National Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Action Fund

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

Governor Hochul would be honored to receive the endorsement of Citizens Union.

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.*

If you have any further questions, you may contact us at candidates@citizensunion.org

Responses to the questionnaire will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office, and to issue our preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.