



Monday, April 4, 2022

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear James Magee,

Congratulations on your decision to run for a seat on the New York Legislature! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serve the public.

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 wish to be considered, please submit the questionnaire by March 16.

If you seek our support, we will need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Given time constraints and the limited capacity of a member-based organization, we may not be able to evaluate all contests or candidates in this election cycle.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name

James Magee

Office Sought (New York State)

Assembly

District Number

37

In which primary

Democratic

What party line/s are you running under?

Democratic

If elected, which legislative conference will you join (e.g., Democrat, Republican, other)?

Democratic

Age

41

Education

JD

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I've never run before.

I've volunteered on several Democratic campaigns over the last 25 years.

Website Magee4queens.com

Twitter [@jimmagee2022](https://twitter.com/jimmagee2022)

Facebook

[Magee4queens](#)

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, consisting of a stylized, cursive letter 'M' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

ETHICS

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, giving it the authority to subpoena testimony and documents, empowering it to suspend or terminate public officials (not elected officials), and increasing its transparency?

No

Do you support significantly limiting outside compensation earned by state legislators and eliminate stipends, while increasing their pay?

No

Do you hold financial interest or serve as an officer on an entity that receives funding from the state? If you do, how will you manage this conflict of interest?

I'm on the 18b panel to represent indigent defendants in Manhattan. I don't foresee that being a conflict. I would de-activate my status.

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.

I'm on the 18b panel to represent indigent defendants in Manhattan. I don't foresee that being a conflict. I would de-activate my status.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Election Administration

How would you use your power as a legislator to improve election administration in New York? Feel free to add any policy proposals you support in regards to reforming the BOE.

I think that there should be more full time employees at the polling places.

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

No

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

No

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

Yes

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

I would need a clearer framework before advocating a change in the constitution.

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

Yes

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.

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)

I think that it should be an independent commission.

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.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

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?

No

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?

Yes

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

Yes

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.

I think that reducing the contribution amount further invites fraud and discourages transparency.

I'd rather be aware of where financial support is coming from than have it hidden.

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

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.

GOALS, PLANS, AND REPRESENTATION

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: Push to restore judicial discretion on bail.

Second: Push for a progressive income tax.

Third: Lobby for the Inter Borough Express train line.

If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce? If you are an incumbent, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to pass?

Restore judicial discretion on bail for assault, robbery and burglary. Decriminalizing Penal 220.03 and 140.10(e).

In providing constituent service, what are the major needs of your district's constituents and how will you meet them?

Public safety. I want to facilitate a working relationship between neighborhood watches and the police precincts.

Transportation. I will lobby for the proposed Interborough Express train line.

I will attend precinct councils, community board meetings, and conduct town halls to meet with constituents.

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). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I was a prosecutor and am a criminal defense attorney. I am a member of the panel that represents indigent clients in criminal cases. I am a civil rights attorney who has filed suit against government actors when a plaintiff's rights have been violated.

In every aspect of my professional career, it has been my job to hold government

actors accountable.

How long have you lived in the district in which you are running?

My entire life.

Have you lived in the district before this year's redistricting?

My entire life.

For incumbents: If your district has changed significantly following this year's redistricting, how do you intend to run your office to serve the needs of the new constituents you now represent?

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race), and what is your plan to achieve that number?

6000.

Door knocking.

What are your current fundraising numbers, if different than the last campaign finance filing?

\$40,000

How many individual donors do you have?

68

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

New York State Court Officers

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I do pro bono legal conflict mediation for the community.

I am married with two young daughters, four and one.

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 the New York State Legislature, 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.