



Wednesday, March 16, 2022

## Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Illapa Sairitupac,  
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](#).

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**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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org). We thank you very much for your response.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name

Illapa Sairitupac

### Office Sought (New York State)

Assembly

### District Number

65

### In which primary

Democratic

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

Democrat

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

Democrat

### Age

35

### Education

Master's of Social Work - NYU Silver School of Social Work

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

I'm a first time Candidate

### Website

[illapa.nyc](http://illapa.nyc)

### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/illapa4ny>

### Facebook

<https://facebook.com/>

[illapa4ny](http://illapa4ny.com)

## 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, appearing to read "W. Santy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and a period following it.

# 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)?**

Yes

**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?**

Yes

**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?**

No

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.

No

# 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.**

First, I support dismantling the current structure of the Boards of Elections and replacing them with non-partisan professionalized boards. Time and time again the Board of Elections has failed to prepare for changes or improvements in our electoral system, but also are highly incentivized to focus more on maintaining a transactional political system, rather than making it easier to vote. County parties are more focused on making sure they can levy jobs and opportunities to curry favors, than have a system that makes voting easier. The Board is composed of people not experienced or qualified for the work, and in turn try to manage it in a way that benefits insiders and friends of the political establishment. We have seen this in New York City, and the only way to get a system modeled on the best practices in other states is if we pass legislation at the state level.

I also believe the civil service system can be an improvement to our current system, which is intended to funnel allegiances to District Leaders and political clubs. In our current model, party figures often rely on the party boss to do outreach for jobs within the Board and polling place. BOE jobs should be available to all people who can do the work, and are excited to serve, not just those who know the right people.

We should also be transitioning into a vote-by-mail system by 2030, where each voter is automatically mailed a postage-paid ballot for each election in which they are eligible to vote. States that use a Vote by Mail or No Excuse Permanent Absentee systems see a dramatic increase in voter participation. When instituted, the increase in participation is seen almost entirely among low propensity voting blocks & increases participation in historically low turnout elections, such as special elections or runoffs. New York is sadly one of the most regressive states in terms of ballot access and I will fight to ensure that we institute a VBM system & expand our democracy to include all New Yorkers.

**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

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

## **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 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)**

It is very important that an independent commission draws the district maps every decade, in a way where they are given the latitude to decide how best to draw the maps, takes in public input in a fair and good faith way, and is composed of set of commissioners that can represent the needs of the people and not solely who appointed them. We had every reason to be optimistic that the current Independent Redistricting Commission would work, but what played out is two groups of partisan representatives on the commission who did not collaborate or work together to present maps, in the expectation that the legislature would get its way in the end. This is not the intent of the structure, and we either need to bring back to ballot initiative an improved system, or begin anew. While not perfect either, the City Council redistricting process has produced fairly contiguous maps in comparison to the partisanly drawn ones at the state level, but that doesn't mean it is not possible for it to be bent towards political ends either. An independent system, with strong judicial review, and strong checks and balances that ensure that a single set of maps is created is important, and we should look towards the recommendations of the good government leaders like CU and the Brennan Center on how we can improve the process that played out for the first time this last cycle.

Ideally the commissioners should draw from a larger set of people and communities. No more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the commissioners should be from one of the

two major parties. Also the process should start with enough time to really bring in community input, and do so transparently with civic organizations and focusing on underrepresented communities. We can improve the system we have, and I support bringing back to the voters a better model, but our own legislators should not be drawing the maps, and I will push back on any version of redistricting that is legislator-led.

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?**

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?**

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.

# 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.**

**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?**

I'm a climate organizer and I come from an organizing background. Last summer I was arrested for participating in a protest in support of the Build Public Renewables act, which will be my first legislative priority once in office. This bill would allow the New York Power Authority to build and run renewable energy projects & is essential to enacting a Green New Deal in New York.

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

We plan to continue to frequently canvass my district after the campaign ends, so that we can provide excellent constituent organizing services not just to those who actively seek us out, but also to those who do not. Our office envisions continuing our door knocking operation and maintaining our high touch approach to Chinese immigrants even after our campaign is won.

I've also been impressed with the fireside chats that Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes has been conducting, breaking down how the New York State government works in multiple languages for constituents & would like to produce similar outreach efforts.

Our campaign has already been partnering with housing groups such as the Broome Street Tenants Alliance and CAAAV to help provide housing assistance to our district and using our field operation to identify residents who are facing housing issues and connecting them with organizations that can help them navigate them. We plan to continue this effort once in office, but also to expand it.

**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'm a member of NYC Democratic Socialists of America, and I've served on the

organizing committees for their EcoSocialists, Anti-War, and Latinos Socialistas Working Groups. I've organized with The Coalition to Protect Chinatown and The Lower East Side, a coalition of neighborhood groups in Lower Manhattan to counter displacement, racism, and exploitation. I've also organized with RAPP Campaign (Release Aging People in Prison) and for parole justice. And with the NYPHRA Coalition, which is involved in the fight to pass the Philippine Human Rights Act (PHRA).

I organized in support of the Invest in Our New York campaign, in which I coordinated Spanish speaking phonebanks to constituents to get them to call their legislators to sign on to the bill. I also distributed literature in support of taxing the rich in neighborhoods in Brooklyn.

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

I've lived in the same apartment in the district for 9 years.

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

Yes

**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?**

n/a

# 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?**

Our win number is 7,501.

We envision this campaign not just as a means of getting elected, but as an opportunity to organize a mass constituency around issues that would greatly improve the conditions of our community. Our strategy is based on harnessing a powerhouse grassroots volunteer team and earning community support through deep engagement with our constituents.

Our campaign's field plan has a goal of knocking on over 100,000 doors before election day, and I'm excited to say we're on our way. We have already recruited over 500 unique volunteers who have completed almost 900 canvassing shifts. We had over 140 volunteers at our campaign launch in November & we regularly turn out over 50 volunteers to canvass every week. We plan to use petitioning to scale up our field operation even further. We also have a dedicated onboarding & volunteer recruitment team who have been inviting signups to get more involved in our campaign, and re-engaging volunteers who we haven't seen in a few weeks. Field is truly very important to us, not only to get elected, but to find constituents where they are, communicate our vision and engage them in our project.

We're holding several weekly field events in multiple languages - for example, we've already mobilized a wonderful team of organizers fluent in Chinese dialects and we are holding regular weekly Mandarin field events. This team knocks the doors of hundreds of likely Mandarin speaking voters every week. We will also be supplementing our door knocking operation with regular targeted phone banks, text banks, postcards, direct mail, community engagement & outreach, and special events.

To achieve these goals, we plan to raise at least \$200,000 & we have already broken \$96k. We won't accept any donations from real estate developers, fossil fuel companies, police unions, or Wall Street. Our campaign will be run by, and funded through, everyday working people. We're proud to say that since our campaign launched, we've received over 2,250 donations from over 1,300 unique donors. In addition to in person and remote fundraisers, I'm actively calling potential donors for 3 or more sessions a week.

We envision our communications strategy as in cohesion with broader political, field, and relational organizing strategy. Our approach will aim to answer the most

pressing and urgent issues of my constituents and build them directly into our message, our outreach, and our press strategy. With our campaign communications, we hope to set an example for the kind of representative I will be once in Albany - as a fair and direct messenger and fighter for the community. This means our strategy will reflect this community – through multilingual phone banking, engaged and informed public advocacy for issues in the district, and ensuring accessibility across all of our messaging. As part of a broader slate of NYC-DSA endorsed candidates, I intend to be outspoken on priority issues of the organization and the slate, on climate, housing, healthcare, labor, among other things. Since my campaign announcement, I've been covered by City & State, the Independent, Jacobin, the Village Sun, and Impacto Latino - I hope to continue a multi-tiered press strategy, prioritizing both national attention and local outlets.

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

We've raised over \$96k

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

We've received over 2,200 donations from over 1,300 individual donors, with an average donation under \$43.

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

New York City Democratic Socialists of America, New York Communities for Change, Tenants PAC, Food & Water Action, State Senators Julia Salazar & Jabari Brisport, Assemblymembers Phara Souffrant Forrest, Zohran Mamdani, Marcela Mitaynes, & Emily Gallagher, and former candidate for City Council & Organizer with RAPP, Jaslin Kaur

## ADDITIONAL INFO

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



Illapa Sairitupac Bio.pdf



Illapa Sairitupac Resume.pdf



Illapa-PalmCard\_March2022\_EnglishSpanish...



Illapa\_PalmCard\_January2022\_r3.pdf

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

My name is Illapa Sairitupac. I'm a social worker, a climate activist, and the son of Indigenous Peruvian immigrants. I've been organizing and working in Assembly District 65 since I first arrived almost 10 years ago. Currently, I work as a social worker giving mental health care to people in my immediate community. I have previously worked as a dog-walker, preschool teacher, and freelance video editor and volunteered as a chaplain at a local hospital and with multiple local food delivery services.

I'm a member of NYC Democratic Socialists of America, and I've served on the organizing committees for their EcoSocialists, Anti-War, and Latinos Socialistas Working Groups. I'm an active member of the National Writers Union (NWU), and I've organized with The Coalition to Protect Chinatown and The Lower East Side, a coalition of neighborhood groups in Lower Manhattan to counter displacement, racism, and exploitation. I've also organized with the RAPP Campaign (Release Aging People in Prison) and for parole justice. And with the NYPHRA Coalition, which is involved in the fight to pass the Philippine Human Rights Act (PHRA).

My climate organizing is predicated in protecting Mother Earth, and as an

Indigenous person, I'm proud to be part of a movement that fights against the corporate fossil fuel interests to build a just and sustainable future in place of capitalism. We need a Green New Deal for New York and I'm proud to have put my body on the line protesting in favor of the Build Public Renewables act, which I believe is vital to winning that fight and a livable future.

Residents of lower Manhattan know that this isn't a faraway issue, but one at our doorstep. Our district is completely surrounded by water, and is already experiencing the results of climate change by extreme flooding. Hurricane Ida and Sandy flooded our subway systems and NYCHA developments, but Albany still hasn't passed any meaningful climate laws in 3 years. I'm running not just to fight for climate justice, but to build a mass movement capable of standing up to the real estate and fossil fuel industries that view our neighborhood as in the way of their profits and our community as a sacrifice zone.

We are running a powerhouse campaign. We had over 140 volunteers at our launch in November, and we regularly turn out at least 60 volunteers every week and have climate conversations at thousands of doors. This is a huge opportunity to build a real climate constituency in a place where the effects of climate change are real, and like all disasters and shocks, impacting poor & immigrant communities hardest. That's why we have dedicated weekly Mandarin events and knock hundreds of Mandarin speaking doors every week. Our coalition is the very people who are most impacted by climate change and who we need to activate to win, not just this election, but a livable future.

**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](mailto: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.