



Monday, March 21, 2022

## Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Russell Matthew Squire,  
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.

\*\*

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Russell Matthew Squire

### Office Sought (New York State)

Assembly

### District Number

73

### 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

37

### Education

A.B., Princeton 2007; J.D., Georgetown 2013

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

Community Board 8 Manhattan: Chair, 2021-present; Member, 2018-present

Lexington Democratic Club: District Leader, 2021-present; President, 2019-2020

I volunteer in my community through my synagogue (Congregation Or Zarua), the Stanley Isaacs Center, and Dorot.

I have worked on and volunteered for many campaigns over the years, including working for the NY DSCC in 2008 and being part of the Biden campaign's

## Pennsylvania voter protection boiler room in 2020

**Website**            [squireforny.com](http://squireforny.com)

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

**Facebook**        <https://www.facebook.com/Russell-Squire-for-Assembly-105218668739415>

### 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**

R. Squire

# 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?**

Yes

**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 do not hold any such interest or serve as an officer in such an entity.

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 do not hold any such interest or serve as an officer in such an entity.

# 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.**

In addition to the policies referred to below to make voting easier and more accessible and to reform and professionalize the BOE, I also support A642B/S284, which would eliminate the "wrong church" rule and allow affidavit ballots that are cast in the wrong location to count for every election in which the voter was eligible to vote.

**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.

There should be special election primaries prior to special elections to fill vacancies.

## **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 believe it should be done by a new independent commission pursuant to the For the People Act or other similar federal legislation.

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.

There should be special election primaries prior to special elections to fill vacancies.

# 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?**

As mentioned above, I would want to give judge's discretion to keep repeat offenders from being released.

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

My district's constituents are concerned about public safety, sanitation, and education (among other issues). Critical to effective constituent services is being able to liaise effectively with agencies and others in government, and I have done that in my time as Chair of Community Board 8.

With regard to public safety, in addition to the legislative changes discussed above, I and my staff would attend precinct community council meetings, and I would maintain communication with the inspectors and deputy inspectors who command the precincts in my district.

With regard to sanitation, I would maintain an effective line of communication between my office and the city's Department of Sanitation to help ensure that resources are targeted where they are needed. I would also work to include money in the state budget to help improve the city's sanitation services, and to the extent that additional services or funding are needed, I would direct member items to trash cleanup services.

With regard to education, I would try to include as much funding in the budget as possible for schools in my district, and would work to supplement funding where needed through member items, including funding targeted to specific programs. I would also lend my voice in support of parents advocating for particular programs in local schools; for example, as Chair of CB8, I worked to help a group of parents get a French language and culture program added to a local school.

**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 worked for the New York State Senate Majority Conference in 2009 and 2010. Part of my work there included supporting the Temporary Committee on Rules and Administration Reform in its work to reform the Senate. The committee's work and resulting legislation were important first steps in the ongoing process of reforming the state legislature.

In 2019, as President of the Lexington Democratic Club, I organized an informational event for the community to explain the ranked choice voting proposal that was on the ballot and ultimately became law.

I have done voter protection work with the Democratic Party for years. I was an intern in the DNC's Voter Protection department during law school and have been a voter protection volunteer on presidential campaigns, including the 2020 Biden Campaign, where I was in the Pennsylvania voter protection "boiler room."

With regard to police accountability, I represented a non-profit that filed multiple amicus briefs in support of the successful effort to have police misconduct records released in the wake of the repeal of Section 50-a of the Civil Rights Law.

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

32 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?**

# 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?**

My campaign has identified a win number based on our projections for this race. We have identified targeted voter contact universes and have built-out plans for effective communication with these targeted voters that reaches a level unlikely to be matched by my opponents.

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

We have raised approximately \$250,000 to date.

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

224

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

<https://squireforny.com/endorsements>

# ADDITIONAL INFO

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

 Citizens Union Questionnaire - Squire Answer...	 Squire for Assembly - Bio.pdf
 Squire for Assembly - Issues.pdf	

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

I have extensive leadership experience in local politics and community involvement in the 73rd Assembly District, where I grew up and have lived continuously for decades, to this day. I have been very active with the Lexington Democratic Club, the only local Democratic Club in this district, for many years, including as a former President and current District Leader. I have also served on Community Board 8 Manhattan--first as a public member, then full member, then committee co-chair, and now as Chair of the board. In those roles, I have worked with government agencies and elected officials to help the people of my community, advocated on behalf of local residents and businesses, and engaged and informed the community on issues great and small.

As an attorney, I was a litigator for eight years at one of the top law firms in the country, with a focus on helping clients recover under their insurance policies. This has given me extensive experience in understanding and solving complex problems, often through creative solutions. I have also maintained a robust pro bono practice, representing tenants in Housing Court, helping transgender people change their names to align with their gender identities, and assisting non-profits in a variety of cases. My legal background will be a tremendous asset as a lawmaker in Albany.

Prior to law school, I worked in politics and government, including for the New York State Senate, where I helped implement reforms to the Senate rules, in addition to work on other issues.

In the course of my career, both professionally and in my volunteer work on behalf of the community, I have demonstrated the ability to work with people to get things

done, while also being able to advocate effectively and take principled stands where needed. I believe that these qualities, combined with the breadth and depth of my experience—in government service, politics, the private sector, and this community—make me uniquely suited to be the next Assembly Member for the 73rd Assembly District, and I hope to have your support.

**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.