



Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - City Council

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for New York City Council!

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. The form includes five short sections: serving constituent, elections and voting, police accountability, council rules and procedures, and miscellaneous.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for city offices, 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 April 17 and no later than 48 before your interview.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Your Info

Name

Vickie Paladino

Running for Council District number

19

In which primary

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

Republican

Age

67

Education

High School

Occupation/Employer

Retired, small business owner

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

President, Whitestone Republican Club, GOP Woman
of the Year 2019, and 2018 Republican Nominee
State Senate District 11

Campaign Contact Information**Website**

www.VickieForNYC.com

Twitter

@VickieforNYC

Facebook

@VickieforNYC

Affirmations

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

Yes

**Have you qualified to receive matching
campaign finance funds from the CFB?**

Yes

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

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

Signature



SERVING CONSTITUENTS

1. For most New Yorkers, the most important thing that their council members do is provide constituent services. How would you run your office to serve your community needs? Please give specific examples.

Our campaign already has a significant presence in the district, with a substantial campaign office. We are already hosting issue-focused town hall events at our office which regularly attract 100+ attendees. We generally have an open-door policy for constituents and voters to drop by any time during office hours (12pm to 8pm) to discuss issues important to them and the community.

We also have done a great deal of outreach to the community in general, and our candidate is well-known as an activist, advocate, and civic leader the people can trust for guidance and unfiltered information. No other candidate in New York is as accessible.

When elected our campaign office will become our district office, and we will continue our transparent open-door policy for constituents in order to ensure every citizen has access to their representative. We will continue our town hall events, and we will integrate our community into the legislative process more thoroughly than prior representatives.

2. If you served as an elected official, what did you do to help your constituents during the Covid-19 pandemic? Please be specific.

3. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running for office?

67 years

4. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce?

Two actually; legislation fully refunding the NYPD and reforming Rikers Island, and next would be ending all COVID-related mandates.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

5. How would you describe the relationship between the City Council and the New York City Board of Elections? How will you use your power as a council member to improve the operations of the NYC BOE?

The NYC Board of Elections is an absolute joke and has proven itself over and over again incapable of managing our electoral process on any level. I cannot remember the last time we had an election in this city without major issues.

The Board needs to be razed and rebuilt from scratch with all new people and processes. The City Council seems unwilling to do what is necessary because our City Council as it is currently composed is a fundamentally corrupt institution populated largely by individuals who'd be hard-pressed to hold down a job at Burger King.

6. Do you consider yourself a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? How will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works?

Ranked-choice voting is an absolute farce and should be abolished immediately. It spits in the face of our democratic process and hands massive power to party bosses to manipulate the process and rig the system by making every step more opaque and confusing to the average voter.

7. The next City Council will appoint members to the city's redistricting commission and decide whether to approve or reject the commission's districting plans. In doing so, future council members will be responsible for shaping a fair political map for the coming decade. If elected, what would your approach be in proposing or voting to appoint commission members, and in considering proposed district maps?

I would have to carefully review all proposals before making any decision on this.

My biggest concern is of course the rampant corruption and partisanship that will no doubt permeate this entire process.

8. Now that New York City has implemented Ranked Choice Voting, do you support moving to an Open Primary system (eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system)?

No

Comments

Why would we try to make an even bigger mess of our election system?

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Citizens Union has been studying police accountability and performance in New York City for more than a decade. In our reports and advocacy efforts we have urged city government to strengthen the accountability of the New York Police Department to the public and create a more cohesive system of police oversight. Previous reports include: [2016 issue brief](#), [2013 position brief on Stop and Frisk](#), [2012 report on the CCRB](#), [2008 policy statement on police misconduct](#). Citizens Union's 2021 agenda for police reform, [published as a report](#) in March, calls for establishing a Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, allowing the CCRB to appeal the Police Commissioner's decisions, making the appointment of Police Commissioner subject to advice and consent of the City Council, consolidating agencies with oversight authority, ending qualified immunity, and more.

9. Do you support making the appointment of the Police Commissioner subject to the advice and consent of the City Council?

No

Comments

The City Council is a legislative branch with no executive authority. How is this even a question?

10. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the police department? How would you ensure penalties are imposed on police officers that commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing?

The NYPD has always had an internal review process. I am satisfied that the NYPD is competent enough to continue that process.

I have almost zero faith in civilian review boards as they are currently comprised of radical activists and partisans of the worst sort. If there is major reform to the civilian review system, I could consider supporting it, but the Commissioner would still retain final say in any case.

Frankly in any discussion about law enforcement in 2021, considering the state of our city, police

discipline is not what we need to be focused on.

11. Do you support consolidating the three bodies that exercise oversight of the NYPD: the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), the Inspector General for the Police Department, the Mayor's Commission to Combat Police Corruption?

No

Comments

12. Do you support giving the CCRB prompt and full access to footage from body-worn cameras, police officers' employment history and disciplinary records and all other document and materials in the possession of the NYPD relevant to its investigations?

No

Comments

13. Feel free to add any other policy proposals you support in regards to police accountability, misconduct, and oversight, or to effective policing including functions, training, and community relations.

We know how to run an efficient, healthy police department while effectively fighting crime in New York. And it surely is not what our political leaders are attempting to do today.

HOW CITY COUNCIL WORKS

One of the first items on the next City Council's agenda will be adopting its rules of proceedings. Those rules will have a substantial effect on the ability of lawmakers to advance their goals, and can send a signal to New Yorkers about elected officials' commitment to making the Council more representative, deliberative, accountable, and efficient. In the last decade, the Council took important steps to reform its rules, including a 2014 overhaul by then-Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and a 2018 administrative change by Speaker Corey Johnson. These reforms have made the body more democratic, given members a more meaningful role in the legislative process, ensured greater equity in the allocation of discretionary funding, and made drafting procedures more transparent. Still, more work is needed enable members to function more effectively and independently of the speaker, and to increase public participation.

14. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?

No

Comments

15. Do you support reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?

No

Comments

16. Do you support making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense?

Yes

Comments

17. The Council Speaker controls the allocation of a large share of the Council's overall discretionary spending, and in 2020 it was reported that the Speaker used this power to "punish" council members who opposed the 2021 budget. How would you balance control and order in the council with reasonable dissent?

This is a corruption issue, which voters ultimately have the final say over.

Corey Johnson is a hopelessly corrupt individual. But then so are most of the Democrats currently leading city government -- both elected and in the bureaucrat class.

This is the government many people in this city have chosen, and until people begin to vote differently, no rule change is going to matter much. Corruption always finds a way.

18. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in City Hall has been severely curtailed since the council and city

government shifted to work remotely. How would you propose to improve community engagement and public participation while using remote technology (in public hearings, meetings, etc.), particularly to ensure equity in participation?

Remote government is a dead-end. It's time to end it. Period.

But we aren't ending it because less transparency is the idea here. It's a feature not a bug, and that's why the corrupt ideologues in our government are pushing for a permanent 'new normal' where everything is done remotely forever. It is of direct benefit to the political class, so here we are.

The only solution here is to demand a return to conventional government. Until that happens the lack of transparency and reduced civic engagement will only get worse. As it is meant to.

MISCELLANEOUS

19. New York City has suffered an immensurable loss from the pandemic and its effects and the city's economy, social life, and culture. What is your path to recovery from this crisis?

First and foremost we must lift all COVID restrictions and mandates. This city will not ever recover if businesses are perpetually threatened with lockdowns and crippling fines due to ever-changing and selectively-enforced rules.

We are also rapidly moving toward a caste system in this city, in which vaccinated people and the wealthy are granted the full rights of citizens, while others are relegated to second-class status. This is fundamentally un-American, arguably unconstitutional, and a clear hindrance to the future success of our economy and our city. And it has nothing to do with public safety.

What entrepreneur is going to risk investment in a city in which the government has the power to simply shut down the entire economy on a whim? Who in their right mind would open a public-facing business in a city in which a mistake on the part of an employee can lead to tens (or even hundreds) of thousands of dollars in fines? What tourist is going

to come to New York City to spend money when they are required to show their papers everywhere they go? How can you operate a business under those conditions?

There is a reason why people are fleeing New York for areas that lack these destructive regulations like Florida and Texas. There's a reason downtown Manhattan is now largely vacant.

Once these restrictions are lifted, the path forward is simple.

First we must refund every penny of every fine levied on businesses since COVID regulations began. These fines were levied unjustly and they must be repaid to the businesses the city helped to destroy.

Next we must streamline the process for loan approvals, licensing, and financial assistance for new businesses. We have to make it as quick and easy as possible for entrepreneurs to found a new business in New York, with particular attention paid to the restaurant and nightlife industries, which have always been magnets for tourism and new residents alike.

And we need to rapidly distribute interest-free and forgivable loans and grants to surviving businesses which have been damaged by almost two years of ongoing COVID regulations.

And finally we need a sustained public-relations campaign to begin to deprogram the years of unjustifiable terror that has been instilled in our population. People need to hear from the government that there is no reason to be afraid to go out, there is no reason to fear public spaces, and that their fellow citizens are human beings, not disease vectors. A tremendous amount of psychological damage has been inflicted on our population by a power-mad government and a wildly irresponsible media apparatus. The COVID fear porn needs to come to an end immediately, in favor of positive fact-based encouragement to get back to normal.

The pandemic is over and we all need to move on with our lives as other states have done. There are vaccines available, there are treatments available, and there is absolutely no reason to live in a constant state of terror anymore. People will continue to get COVID just as they get other illnesses, and the overwhelming majority will simply recover. Some will die, sadly, just as they do with

any other illness. There is no way to avoid it and we need to stop destroying our world for the illusion of perfect safety.

20. What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency and oversight). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

The government which governs least, governs best.

Needless to say, by that standard experiences with good government in New York City are virtually impossible.

21. 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: Refund and re-empower the NYPD. Reopen Rikers Island and ensure criminals face consequences.

Second: End all COVID restrictions and reignite the business community.

Third: Protect my local district from destructive upzoning plans which include the abolition of single-family homes as well as homeless shelters in our communities.

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 grew up in this district. I raised a family here, ran two small businesses here, and have witnessed the decline we're experiencing first hand every step of the way. Our current leadership has failed, and our government has made our lives here worse in every measurable way.

It's time for a change, and nobody is better qualified to deliver that change than Vickie Paladino.

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 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.