



Monday, September 13, 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)

We thank you very much for your response.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Your Info

#### Name

Sal albanese

#### Running for Council District number

50

#### In which primary

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

Democrat

**Age**

72

**Education**

BA, MA, JD

**Occupation/Employer**

Attorney, Allegaert Berger Vogel

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

Former NYC Councilmember, candidate for Mayor  
1997, 2013, 2017

**Campaign Contact Information****Website**

SAL2021.com

**Twitter**

SalAlbaneseNYC

**Facebook**

SalAlbanese

**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.**

I would fully staff my constituent office with employees who are familiar with City bureaucracy. I would do outreach to the community to advertise the office through social media, newsletters, etc I would ensure that the office is physically accessible to constituents including disabled residents by locating on a main strip on street level. Having done this before I would personally review all constituent complaints monthly to ensure follow up and successful solutions to the problem.

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

I wasn't in office

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

5 years

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

I will introduce a bill to move NYC elections to non partisan

## 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?**

I believe the City Council has done very little to professionalize and reform the BOE. Despite the institutional limitations I will urge more oversight hearings on operations of the Board. I would use the confirmation hearings to screen commissioners based on their commitment to reform. Too many Commissioners are simply political appointees & have no expertise in how to reorganize the Board. I would ensure that they would be supportive of efforts to overhaul the body.

**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?**

I was on the Charter Commission that adopted RCV and will continue to advocate for continuance of RCV. Furthermore, I will push the for funding the education of voters to further strengthen the process.

**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?**

My objective is to have a redistricting that is fair & as free from political interference as possible. Therefore, my vote on the appointment of members and a final vote on the district lines will be based on that principle. I will consider maps that keep neighborhoods together and ensure that lines don't disenfranchise minority neighborhoods. For example, the Asian population has increased in NYC yet the district lines are not drawn in a way to fairly increase their representation.

**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)?**

Yes

**Comments**

## **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?**

Yes

**Comments**

**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 police commissioner should have final say in the discipline of the department. Every agency head must have that power to properly administer their agency. Of course, if the person disciplined doesn't agree with the penalty they have the option of filing an Article 78.

There is a matrix that the NYPD adopted that does it's best to ensure penalties are fair. Of course in all disciplinary matters its difficult to apply a one fits all approach. Always lots of nuance in these matters.

**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**

I would consider consolidation if the details of the merger would be spelled out. However, not until we drill down to investigate details.

**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**

I may agree to above if I can be ensured that the

officers due process rights are protected

**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.**

I want to extend the training of officers to one year from six months in the academy. I would like to enhance applicant investigation so that candidates are adequately screened to ensure top flight officers. I would also like to make the compensation of officers equal to suburban pay scale so we can retain our top people.

## **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?**

Yes

### **Comments**

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

Yes

### **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?**

The residents of a district should not be penalized because of internal politics of the council. The speaker has significant influence over who chairs powerful committees that provides him/her with leverage over members.

**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?**

I would work to improve the technology and expand outreach to general public to ensure maximum participation.

## 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?**

ensure that we provide top flight basic city service. I will work hard to make the city safe by working with the police to reduce crime on our streets and transit system. Mass transit has to be efficient affordable and accessible. Our streets have to be clean and we need to provide help for the mentally ill on our streets. The City can come roaring back but without improving basic services it will be difficult.

**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.**

I have been a champion and a pioneer of campaign finance reform in NYC going back to my first stint as a councilmember. As a Commissioner on Charter 2019 I was a strong advocate for a number of initiatives such as Rank Choice Voting, reducing conflict of interest on the conflict and interest board, I was a couple of votes short of having the commission adopt non partisan elections. As a member of the Public Safety Committee on the Council when i served I was considered an expert on the topic. I published articles in the NY Tlmes, Post, Daily News, Newsday and Newsweek

**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: political reform, I will introduce bills on campaign finance reform, non partisan elections, independent redistricting and promote them in the council and public arena.

Second: property tax reform, will work with my colleagues and the state legislature to overhaul the unfair property tax system

Third: Invest in mass transit especially in my home boro of Staten Island

## **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 have the experience and background to be a leader on the Council especially with 35 new members. I was an elected official a public school teacher and have a background in finance and law.

**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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org).