



Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

[Kristen Serene Gonzalez](#)

Office Sought (New York State)

[Senate](#)

District Number

17

In which primary

[Democratic](#)

What party line/s are you running under?

[Democratic and Working Families Party](#)

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

[Democratic and Working Families Party](#)

Age

26

Education

[Bachelors](#)

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

[Executive Committee Member of Queens Community Board 4](#)

Website www.gonzalezforny.com

Twitter [@Gonzalez4NY](https://twitter.com/Gonzalez4NY)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/gonzalezforny>

[com/Kristen-Gonzalez-
for-New-York-
101500089124015](https://www.citizensunion.com/Kristen-Gonzalez-for-New-York-101500089124015)

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 that reads "Kristen Gonzalez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

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 served on the Executive Committee of Queens Community Board 4 but am not running for reelection because of my run for Senate.

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 served on the Executive Committee of Queens Community Board 4 but am not running for reelection because of my run for Senate.

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 wholeheartedly believe that a fair and transparent election process is key to a healthy democracy. New York State's party-dominated election administration is antithetical to the spirit of democracy. I will use my power as a legislator to change this through the implementation of a merit-based hiring system, similar to civil service jobs.

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)

I believe that tweaks have to be made to the Independent Redistricting Commission in order to make it truly independent. The focus on bi-partisan agreement led to gridlock within the commission, which ultimately culminated in the legislature drawing the districts. We have to reimagine a commission which is truly merit-based independent redistricting 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?

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.

Reducing the campaign contribution limits would encourage more grassroots candidates to run for office, and would ensure that candidates are not accountable to just high donors, but to their constituents.

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: First and foremost, I promise that my office will be beholden to the constituents and not to corporate, or big monied interests. I plan to do this primarily through a rigorous, grassroots constituent affairs program. My district is diverse and large, but I will put together a constituent services team that will prioritize all of the key constituencies, with a particular interest in historically marginalized groups.

Second: Second, my policy will be guided by community activists and organizers, not by consultants. Socialist and progressive organizers have been at the forefront of forging policy in the past decade, and we must continue to listen to those who fight for our community.

Third: Lastly, I will be a voice for labor within and without New York. As a child of a union parent, I fully understand that New York was built by union labor. I will support them by passing legislation that will make it easier for shops to be organized, and opposing any "right to work" legislation that may come up.

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?

When elected I will make it my main priority to assist with the passing of the Good Cause legislation, if it has not passed already by the time I join the legislature. I believe that the Good Cause is extremely time sensitive, as it would prevent people from being evicted as working class people are beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Due to how large and diverse my district is, one of the major needs is language justice. I will do whatever is necessary to ensure that my constituents have access to any resources offered by our constituent affairs team in the top spoken languages of the district.

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.

Government accountability and transparency has been a huge motivator behind my organizing. After years of seeing my community in Queens be underrepresented and underserved, I've invested my time in solutions that shift power into the hands of the many, not the few. In 2018, I advocated for increased transparency and oversight of LinkNYC kiosks, and pushed for the POST Act in NY City Council (a bill that required oversight and transparency around the NYPD's use of surveillance technology). I've worked on voting rights and voter registration, for example planning a Freedom Walks event with LULAC in 2019 as part of their campaign to expand voter rights nationwide. I also served as the chair of the Census Committee on my community board in 2020, to increase our count and government investment. I've also worked on public ownership of public land through land trust organizing, because I believe that it is unethical for our government to continue selling public land to private real estate developers.

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

This is a brand new district, but I have been in Queens my whole life.

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

See above.

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?

12,000 - Our plan is to do 6 passes of voters in this district via door knocking and phone banking.

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

\$32,000

How many individual donors do you have?

368

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

NY Working Families Party, TREEage, NYC Democratic Socialists of America, Make The Road, Run For Something, CUFFH Action, Courage to Change, Am. Zohran Mamdani, Am. Marcela Mitaynes, Am. Emily Gallagher, Sen. Julia Salazar, Sen. Jabari Brisport

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?

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.

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