



Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Cordell Cleare,

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Cordell Cleare

Office Sought (New York State)

Senate

District Number

32

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

Education

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I served as a Tenant Advocate and as Chair of the NYC Coalition to End Lead Poisoning, where I took on the big landlords and helped pass the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act, forcing landlords to remove hazardous lead paint that was crippling our children.

I am co-founder of the Michelle Obama Democratic Club and have represented Assembly District 68 and then Assembly District 70 as Democratic District Leader for many terms. Previously, I served as a member and then president of School Board 3, and also became President of Community Education Council (CEC) #3.

As the New York State Senator representing District 30 since winning the special

election in November 2021, I have been named Chair of the Committee on Women's Issues, and have been appointed to the Cities 1, Disabilities, Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, Health and Consumer Protection Committees.

Website

Twitter

Facebook

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 "Cordell Clew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

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?

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.

I will do whatever I can to make our election more fair, more just, more efficient, and more transparent. I would be happy to hear from the Citizens Union about ways that I can be supportive.

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 want it to be done by a fair non-partisan body whose job it is to make the districts representative of the people and not of party politics.

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.

First: Tenant protections and quality affordable housing - I want to ensure that tenants have a voice at the table and strengthen protections against unscrupulous landlords, fully fund NYCHA repairs so residents can live comfortably and with dignity, extend the eviction moratorium until at least the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and make sure our neighbors aren't pushed out of their homes. While holding bad faith developers accountable, we also need to work with local and community developers to expand more units of deeply affordable housing. I will support legislation like Good Cause Eviction and I have introduced legislation to replace units of affordable housing taken away by eminent domain, destroyed in fires, vacated or for any other reason.

Second: Public education - To ensure all students have access to a quality education, I want to strengthen the remote learning curriculum and ensure all students obtain remote devices, include civic engagement and Black history in the New York City public school curriculum, and support teachers and fully fund New York City public schools so that every child has the chance to succeed.

Third: Public safety/Ending mass incarceration - I consider these two topics as faces of the same coin. We cannot have one without the other. I will fight to combat gun violence and make sure residents are safe on our streets and in our homes. I want to push support for CURE Violence intervention and to address the underlying causes of gun violence and crime like poverty and racism. I will also fight to eliminate racial profiling in policing, protect the civil rights of all our residents, increase the use of treatment, alternative sentencing, and pathways to rehabilitation and reduce the use of incarceration.

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 introduced legislation to replace units of affordable housing that have been taken away or destroyed, and I want that piece passed.

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

The most common need in my district is affordable housing that is actually affordable to the current and generations of residents of Harlem. We need to provide more funding for ERAP, fully fund NYCHA and expedite repairs, and replace the public housing that has been taken away by eminent domain, destroyed in fires,

vacated, or for any other reason.

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.

The comprehensive lead poisoning prevention bill that I got passed that required mandated regulation and checks to prevent lead poisoning in children.

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

50+ 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?

I intend to serve my new constituents the way I serve my current constituents. I will always make myself and my staff available to them, I will respond to any crisis expediently, and I will research and investigate any additional needs that they present so that I can best represent their interests in Albany.

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?

I plan to win this race with a similar, if not higher, percentage than what I earned in the special election. I won with over 88% of the vote in November, 2021.

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

Approximately \$100,000

How many individual donors do you have?

Not sure at this time, but can get an answer for the screening interview.

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

WFP, NYLCV (to be announced), CVHP (to be announced), CUFFH, Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin, Mayor Eric Adams, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Assemblymembers Manny De Los Santos, Inez Dickens, Edward Gibbs, Danny O'Donnell, Linda Rosenthal and Al Taylor, Councilwomen Diana Ayala, Gale Brewer and Carmen De La Rosa, and a number of Democratic clubs.

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.

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