

Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate,

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 June 27, 2022.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name

Christian Magnotta Amato

Office Sought (New York State)

Senate

District Number

34

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

34

Education

BFA - SUNY Plattsburgh

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I worked to get Alessandra Biaggi elected in 2018 as a Regional Field Director and Digital Director. I went on to set up her district office, meeting with local electeds, community groups, and other stakeholders on a regular basis as her Deputy Chief of Staff and District Director. After leaving that office, I worked to get other Democrats elected and also worked on statewide policy issues. He ran Andom Ghebreghiorgis' campaign for the 16th Congressional District, Elisa Crespo's groundbreaking race for NYC Council (she would have been the first transgender City Council member), and Amanda Farias' successful City Council race in 2021, where her district overlaps with parts of SD34. I worked with the Community

Service Society and state legislators including Health Committee Chairs Sen. Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Richard Gottfried, while managing the CSS-led Campaign to End Medical Debt. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I formed a mutual aid network, connecting community members with the services and supplies they needed. I also serve on Community Board 11 in the Bronx, where I chair the transportation committee. I am a board member of the Liberty Democratic Association and Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association and have also worked on advocacy initiatives for the New Pride Agenda.

Website christianamato.com

Twitter @amatofony

Facebook /amatofony

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, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a vertical line and a large, rounded 'O'.

ETHICS

What is your opinion on the recently passed ethics reform, which replaced JCOPE with a new ethics oversight agency called Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government? Did you support this policy?

I think the nomination structure is really interesting, and ideally, will create a deeper level of accountability. Overall the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government seems like a much more equitable body than before. The challenge with JCOPE was that it met infrequently. My hope is that issue will not be repeated in this new commission.

Do you support the new independent ethics oversight agency to also replace the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC)?

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 ethics issues.

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 believe we must reduce the number of commissioners from 10 to 4 and require the New York City Council to conduct a transparent, merit-based process for selecting commissioners. We should require that commissioners and executive staff complete election law and administration training like Ohio and North Carolina. I would also remove the requirement in state law that all agency staff should reflect equal representation of the two major political parties, which has exacerbated patronage hiring.

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?

Yes

Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting?

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)

We saw this year that the Independent Redistricting Commission was not successful in this redistricting cycle, however, the legislature was not organized throughout the mapmaking process and failed to accept maps which forced the process into a tailspin. Creation of a new body is not necessary if the IRC can deliver equitable maps and the legislature accepts them.

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: Bold Climate Action - by passing the CCIA and BPRA, investing in resiliency infrastructure, funding salt marsh restoration, creating weatherization initiatives, and focusing on the intersectionality of the climate crisis.

Second: Accessible Transit - Funding the creation of more ferry routes, modernizing and fully electrifying our bus fleet, addressing transit deserts by promoting better transit infrastructure, and tackling ADA access

Third: Arts & Culture - I want to launch a permanent arts worker program, establish state designated cultural districts, create more localized culture as a way to promote public safety, and establish more arts funding to ensure all communities have art in their regions.

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 would enact a Coastal Adaptation Permitting Act, which would require an agency to explore, and authorize it to implement, options within the agency's jurisdiction to establish a more coordinated and efficient regulatory review and permitting process for coastal adaptation projects that use natural infrastructure.

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

From my experience serving this district, many calls are from seniors and they tend to be general loneliness calls. Other instances are the quality of life concerns like public safety, downed trees, transit issues, and flooding; NYCHA issues and tenant issues, zoning issues, and city-focused topics.

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 have been a longtime advocate - publicly protesting JCOPE and supporting the Sexual Assault Hearings, I was proud to protest for greater police accountability throughout 2021, and I have been a long-time proponent for election reform and voting reforms.

Do you currently live in this district? How long have you lived in it?

I live just outside the district itself by a three blocks, but I live in the current iteration of the district. I have lived in this community all 34 years of my life.

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?

Being that it is an August primary, we anticipate low turnout and estimate our win number to be around 7,400 votes.

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

\$30,000 spent, \$20,000 cash on hand

How many individual donors do you have?

210

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

christianamato.com/endorsements

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 office, 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.