

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Nathalia Fernandez

Office Sought (New York State)

Senate

District Number

34

In which primary

Democratic

What party line/s are you running under?

Democratic

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

Democrat

Age

34

Education

BA, Public Relations from Hofstra University 2010

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

NYS Assembly D80, 2018-2022

Fernandez for The Bronx, 2021. Finished 3rd.

Website fernandezforsenate.com

Twitter <https://twitter.com/Fernandez4NY>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Fernandez4NY>

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, appearing to read "M. Fernandez", written in a cursive style.

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 believe that establishing a new agency to provide proper, independent oversight is desperately needed in our state government. The policy gives this office and service the fresh start it needed, which is why I have and still do support this policy as an Assmeblymember as well as a candidate for State Senate.

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, I do not hold nor have I ever held any financial interest in, served as an officer on, or held any role on an entity that receives funding from the state.

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 would fight to increase funding for community outreach and education on the different election cycles and voting options/procedures. Each election cycle there is a very disappointing effort made to inform voters of vital information to fully participate in our democracy. For example, this issue was highlighted during 2021 with the introduction of Ranked Choice Voting. I will also continue to support the reform of their hiring practices to ensure employees are qualified and awarded positions based on merit rather than picked by the political parties.

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.

(cont.) 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, but I hold some concerns that 30 days is not sufficient time to properly inform the public of an election.

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)**

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.

(cont.) 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, but I hold some concerns that 30 days is not sufficient time to properly inform the public of an election.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Do you support further reducing campaign contribution limits?

No

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.

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. In fact, I participated in a similar NYC program last year for the Bronx Borough President election. It provides real power to the small contribution donors who rarely, if ever, have an opportunity to support political candidates in such a way. However, I am concerned with sustainability if it turns out to cost the state more than anticipated. Ultimately, I support this program as it is a tool that empowers local communities to participate in the election process.

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: Strengthening Small Business

Second: Transportation & Public Safety

Third: Preparing for Climate Change

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 want to pass my recently introduced package of bills currently sponsored by myself and Senator Gounardes: the 21st Century Anti-Stalking Act. With this bill, courts would be able to grant orders of protection for more modernized circumstances of stalking to include digital and online harassment.

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

To address the local needs of my district we need to widen the opportunity for small businesses to succeed. I want to open the ability for more MWBE's to obtain state contracts, as well as funding for more grants to jumpstart their success. Environmental concerns also tie into our infrastructure woes, my district needs the resources to build resiliency against the elements while also creating jobs.

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 volunteered with many community groups to host voter registration drives and recently with the census. I have introduced and passed into law police reform bills and continue to educate the community on this issue. I have participated and held workshops on cannabis justice and social justice. I have joined marches for BLM, transportation reform and improvement, climate justice, and have marched against union busting companies.

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

I have until the recent redistricting, which has left me 1 block outside the senate

district line. However, I have lived in the East Bronx for over 15 years.

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?

The 80th Assembly District has not changed and my assembly staff are dedicated to remaining everly present and available to our constituents for the rest of the term I am serving. The senate district has changed but not in any way that would remove me from the local issues or events that occur as I am involved in the many communities outside the 80th.

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?

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

How many individual donors do you have?

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

The Bronx Democratic Party; Senator Jamaal Bailey; Assemblywoman Karines Reyes; TWU Local 100; the National Association of Social Workers; CWA Local 1180 and 1101.

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 am a leader that my community knows they can count on. For 10 years I have held the trust and support of my community to dutifully serve as their public servant.

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.