

2023 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

Dear candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for a seat on the New York City Council! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serving the public.

This form includes six sections with questions about your positions on various reform issues and your plans for the office:

- Serving constituents
- Elections and voting
- Campaign finance
- Oversight of City Hall
- Police accountability
- City Council rules
- There are also questions about the candidate's bio and the campaign

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](#).

You can learn more about Citizens Union's policy agenda in our [issues section](#).

**

If you wish to be considered, please submit this questionnaire by Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

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 cannot see your answers unless you submit the form.

You can also download a blank questionnaire [here](#) and email it to us.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Candidate info

Name Christopher Marte

Running for Council District number

In which primary

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Incumbent council member for NYC District 1.

Website votemarte.com

Twitter [@nycdistrict1](https://twitter.com/nycdistrict1)

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

Have you qualified to receive matching campaign finance funds from the CFB?

No

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

SERVING CONSTITUENTS

1. For most New Yorkers, the most important thing their Council Members do is provide constituent services. How have you run your office (or for non-incumbents, how would you run your office) to serve your community's needs? Please give specific examples. What are the major problems in your district that require constituent services?

We started by relocating our district office from the back of a dentist office on Broadway to a storefront in Chinatown where anyone needing assistance is welcome to walk-in. We have a full-time staff in our office dedicated entirely to handling and managing constituent services cases. A large portion of constituent service cases we handle pertain to housing conditions and/or tenant-landlord disagreements. We have been successful in restoring heat and gas to many tenants in our district, and we have also helped many tenants avoid eviction and homelessness by informing them of their rights, connecting them with legal counsel, and even helping them organize tenants unions.

2. For incumbents: Which bill did you introduce, and most want to see passed? Why is that your top priority? For non-incumbents: If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce in the new year? Why is that your top priority?

Our top priority has been INT-0175, a bill to end the 24 hour workday for home care workers and ensure that they are paid for ALL hours that they work. Nowhere else in the state do home attendants work 24-hour shifts, instead patients who need 24 hour care receive it in the form of split shifts. Most 24-hour home attendants are immigrant women of color, who's physical and mental health are destroyed by these barbaric working conditions. NYC cannot claim to be a progressive city while allowing the abuse of this immigrant workforce.

3. 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 am a proud member of the progressive caucus; our chief focus is issues pertaining to social justice, ethical governance, and government transparency. I have sponsored or supported many bills that have a primary focus of bolstering these ideals and I will continue to do so in the future. As somebody from a low-income background, I have participated in and benefit from the City's campaign finance matching program.

4. What are your top three campaign promises or goals? Feel free to reference an answer to another question on this form rather than restate it.

First: Continue to push for the adoption of the Chinatown Working Group Plan as an alternative to developer-driven rezoning plans

Second: Fight to ensure that all workers across all industries in our district are treated with the dignity and receive the working conditions and benefits they duly deserve

Third: Continue to secure funding for our schools and public housing and for much needed infrastructure projects in our district

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Citizens Union recently [published a report](#) about moving New York City's municipal elections to even-numbered years, so they would align with presidential or gubernatorial elections, showing this change could boost voter turnout, diversify the electorate, and save money.

6. What is your position on that proposal to move New York City's municipal elections to even-numbered years and on the overall concept?

I support this proposal- I think voter turnout is extremely important, especially in the current political climate, and I think this proposal is a good way to potentially increase participation in local elections.

7. Are you a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? If so, how will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works? If not, please elaborate on your position.

I am a supporter of ranked choice voting. In 2021 we included instructions and information about ranked choice voting in multiple languages in our campaign materials to ensure that voters would not be confused when they arrived at the poll site. I will advocate for better designed ballots so it is also more clear.

8. New York City is one of few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the election that typically decides who gets elected to office. Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in the primary?

No, I don't think we should shift to open primaries, but we should allow changing party and voter registration to be easier.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

9. If you ran for office before, to what extent have Independent Expenditure entities ("Super-PACs") spent money in your race? Was it done in your favor or opposition of your candidacy?

We do not take money from Super PACs. In 2021, Common Sense NYC ran a series of (unsuccessful) attack ads against our campaign, totaling around \$70,000. We are the only candidate to be targeted by this Super PAC and win.

10. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by "bundling" donations from other people, a loophole that can give insiders greater access to officeholders. Do you support banning bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?

Absolutely. This is an extremely unfair way for individuals with special interests to have undue influence on the outcome of an election. I would completely support a measure that would ban this sort of donation bundling.

OVERSIGHT OF CITY HALL

11. For incumbents: Oversight of the administration is one of the most important roles of the City Council. Please describe how you used your position to ensure City agencies and City government are accountable to the people of New York.

Our office is committed to being able to serve our constituents and to do this we often refer people to the relevant City agency that can assist them with their problem. We have, on numerous occasions, received complaints about a lack of effort and/or communication from this City agency when the constituent has sought help. We are committed to ensuring that City agencies actually serve the people in this city, and I am proud to support legislation that works toward this goal. For example, I co-sponsored a bill that would require the DOB to submit legitimate "before and after" pictures when they perform an inspection for a constituent with a complaint, and I have supported numerous other bills that are similar in spirit.

In the last year, media reports have exposed potential ethical issues within City Hall concerning [conflicts of interest](#) among [top officials](#), the use of [public resources for private matters](#), [appointments](#) of friends and relatives, and [loosening transparency measures](#).

12. How do you see your role as a Council Member in ensuring high ethical behavior standards and effective ethics oversight and enforcement?

We must work to hold all of our government agencies accountable to make sure they cater to the constituents of our city, and not special interests. I am proud to have sponsored legislation that serves this idea.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REFORM

13. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? How would you ensure that penalties imposed on police officers are commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing?

I think an elected civilian complaint review board should have the final say in police misconduct, and in more serious cases, an impartial jury. I support the 2021 measure that ended qualified immunity, ensuring that officers who violate protocol, and the law, are held responsible for it.

15. Under the 2021 police reform plan, the City committed to expanding programs that effectively shift responsibilities from the NYPD to other agencies in areas like mental health, homelessness outreach, school, and youth, while investing in alternative models for community-driven public safety, such as Cure Violence programs. What do you think about the progress of these efforts? How would you improve policing in the City's various communities?

These programs have had a good start, but we need to continue to emphasize their effectiveness, and ensure that they are implemented regularly. Police are still responding to mental health calls with tragic results. Improving policing begins with improving the communication between local precincts and the communities they serve. Encouraging participation at precinct-community meetings is a good way to foster communication, and precincts must not only be aware of the issues in the communities they serve, but must also understand why these issues exist. Understanding the cause of problems in the community, as opposed to just responding to them, will help ensure that certain situations are handled properly, and with minimal negative side effects to the community.

CITY COUNCIL RULES

PATH TO VICTORY

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals?

We have privately raised over \$88,000.

Please indicate any endorsements that your campaign has received, if applicable (you can also

share a link to a list of endorsements)

We have received endorsements from Downtown Independent Democrats, Grand Street Democrats, Village Reform Democratic Club, New Downtown Democrats, Asian American Democratic Club, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York Action, New York Immigration Coalition Action, Voters for Animal Rights, and the New York League of Conservation Voters.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below.

At the bottom of the preview page, you can

- **get a copy of your answers by clicking PRINT, and**
- **submit the questionnaire by clicking SUBMIT.**

IF YOU DO NOT CLICK SUBMIT, WE WON'T RECEIVE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email. *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