

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](#).

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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.

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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 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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	Hailie Kim
Running for Council District number	26
In which primary	Democratic
Age	30
Education	BA-SUNY Purchase, MA-Hunter College
Occupation	Professor, SUNY Old Westbury
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement	

MinKwon Center for Community Action - Housing Organizer and leader of Hate Free Zones Initiative
Flushing Food Pantry - Organizer
Sunnyside/Woodside Mutual Aid - Organizer
Hunter College - Professor
2021 Democratic Primary for City Council - Candidate

Website hailiekim.com

Twitter @hailieforqueens

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

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

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

(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?

My office would be operated with constant input and feedback from constituents, hosting regular town halls and conducting outreach to members of the community typically left out of the political process. This district is incredibly diverse in terms of language, so language access, cultural competence, and translation services need to be central to all these efforts. Most constituents are tenants, so I'll be dealing with issues pertaining to bad landlords, rent hikes, and public housing maintenance for the NYCHA residents here. Rezoning and new developments are a concern for residents fearful of displacement, so measures need to be taken to ensure affordability and keeping people in their homes. Quality of life issues such as cleaner streets, better lighting, and more greenspaces are also common issues.

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?

The first piece of legislation I'd like to introduce is a jobs program, the New York Quality of Life Corps. This would create 25,000 good-paying public sector jobs that would benefit the community and visitors with projects such as creating greenspaces, public arts programs, home care for seniors, tutoring, maintaining green infrastructure, contact tracing, and more. Those seeking employment would be gaining skills and experience to help them find future work, while all New Yorkers benefit from the improvements to their quality of life - a true win-win. This will also boost the economy, increase stability, and hopefully have residual effects like decreasing crime. I hope the program can serve as a model for a future federal jobs guarantee.

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.

While working at MinKwon Center for Community Action, I worked on a project dedicated to ensuring

voter access to members of the AAPI community. We monitored polling sites, conducted surveys, and reported our findings.

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: Fully fund education from 3-K to CUNY and restore the budget cuts

Second: Implement my jobs program, the New York Quality of Life Corps

Third: Create affordable housing using social housing models and community land trusts

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

5. How would you describe the relationship between the City Council and the New York City Board of Elections? How will you use (or have you used) your power as a Council Member to improve the operations of the NYC BOE?

I look forward to working with Citizens Union to institute reforms to the NYC BOE, especially around issues of campaign finance regulation. I would describe the current relationship between Council and NYC BOE as underwhelming.

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 completely support this concept. Our election cycles are cumbersome and confusing to voters, reducing participation.

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 full supporter of Ranked Choice Voting. But not enough people understand and are making full use of the ranking system, which demonstrates the need for public education campaigns to ensure fuller participation.

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?

I fully support open primaries and believe in an era of shrinking democracy, our solution should be the expansion of democracy.

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?

Super-PACs were not a factor in this district in the 2021 cycle and I do not expect them to become a factor in the 2023 cycle for this district.

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?

I fully support a ban on so-called “bundling” by people in the Doing Business with the City database. This is a clear conflict of interest.

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.

N/A

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?

I appreciate the history of Citizens Union’s formation as a watchdog organization for citizens over public institutions. What we witness from the Council is frequent backroom dealing and dereliction of oversight duty, especially when it comes to serving as a check on the executive branch. Members often demonstrate deference where they should be demonstrating independence and strength. I will not serve as just another rubber-stamp for the Mayor and Speaker, and will push for greater ethics oversight and accountability.

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?

The New York City Civilian Review Board should be the final say on police discipline and its decisions should be binding to ensure penalties are consistent with the gravity of offenses. I also support the transfer of disciplinary hearings involving police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

14. What changes should be made to the independent oversight bodies to ensure they can effectively hold police officers who commit wrongdoing accountable (the Civilian Complaint Review Board, Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD, the Commission to Combat Police Corruption)?

The appointment of the Police Commissioner should be subject to the advice and consent of the City Council. We should also merge the Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD and the Commission to Combat Police Corruption into the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

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?

I completely support the shifting of such responsibilities away from the NYPD to other agencies and investing in alternative models for community-driven public safety. Such efforts are, frankly, not moving at the speed necessary for our communities.

CITY COUNCIL RULES

16. In December 2022, Speaker Adams proposed changes to the Rules of the City Council that would have potentially rolled back positive reforms related to bill drafting services and the power of members and committee chairpersons, among other issues. Although this proposal has been pulled, additional work is needed to make the Council a more democratic, effective, and open legislative body. What reforms would you like to see in the Rules of the City Council?

I am deeply troubled by any efforts to amend the Rules of the City Council in a manner that rolls back such positive reforms. The City Council should be an open and democratic institution. We need to work on improving transparency in legislative drafting, proceedings, and expenditures, allowing greater public access and participation with earlier public notice and new practices for usage of remote technology. We should also increase committees' and chairs' role in reviewing and approving all portions of the city budget, especially in light of the drastic austerity measures taken in FY2023.

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race)? 9,500

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals? \$22,943

How many individual donors do you have? 274

ADDITIONAL INFO

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

I immigrated to Sunnyside from Seoul at 5 years old, raised in a working class family by a nail technician and a home care worker who struggled to make ends meet. I proudly attended public schools in the district at PS 150 and Baccalaureate School for Global Education, and went on to become an educator myself at Hunter College, where I assisted students struggling to navigate difficult learning conditions during the pandemic. As the Housing Organizer at MinKwon Center, I've been on the frontline of protests for Good Cause eviction, ending 421-A, and freezing rent hikes. I also launched the Hate Free Zone initiative to address the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, leading Know Your Rights trainings along with cross-cultural events and rallies to empower the community. I'm an educator, an organizer, and a tenant. I'm running for city council because I believe in a future for our community where housing is a human right, quality education is available to all, and everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

I will not take contributions from real estate, lobbyists, police unions, corporations, or the fossil fuel industry.

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