

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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	Julie Won
Running for Council District number	26
In which primary	Democratic
Age	32
Education	Syracuse University (BA)
Occupation	NYC Council Member

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Board member: Queens Community Board 2, Queens Borough President's 202 Census Complete Count Committee, as well as volunteering and serving on boards of various local non-profits like Queens Together, CCD: 696 Build Queensbridge, etc.

Website juliewon.com

Twitter @juliej_won

Facebook @juliej_won

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?

Constituent services are the backbone of any elected office. From the beginning I have aimed to hire a diverse and multilingual staff, and to engage with community organizations and centers. This district has a high immigrant population who need assistance accessing city services. Our staff reflects our community, as we are fluent in 5+ languages, and closed over 1,800 cases since January 2022. As we grow, we also need to help local businesses and organizations access programs like grants or navigate permitting.

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?

In my first year, the Council passed 2 of my bills as part of a ground-breaking Language Access program. During Hurricane Ida, my district suffered the greatest number of deaths of any in the city—including a family in a basement apartment who did not understand the city emergency broadcasts sent in English. Now, the city will be required to provide emergency broadcasts, enforcement actions, and other communications in many more languages. Also, with my legislation, and the \$5 million in funding I've secured, we will create a language-access co-op that will provide culturally competent translation services employing people from local immigrant communities.

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 serve as Chair of the City Council's Contracts Committee, and in that capacity, have broad oversight authority over City contracts and procurement. I've held hearings digging into mismanagement of contracts ranging from non-profit services to conditions in our shelters. It is incredibly important to me to hold agencies and the administration accountable, and address the systemic issues that result in so much waste, fraud, and delays of service for everyday New Yorkers.

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: Fight for more affordable housing

Second: Bring neighborhood-wide comprehensive planning

Third: Fully fund our neighborhoods' schools, parks, city services

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?

The New York City Board of Elections is a broken agency, needing reform and far stricter oversight. One systemic issue is the Board has routinely failed to clearly explain electoral processes to the public, which is why I am also cosponsoring a bill to require that the Board improve how it informs the public on the timing and nature of elections.

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?

As a measure to boost voter turnout overall in municipal elections, I would support the idea of consolidating election days.

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.

Yes. Ranked choice voting is a tool that allows for better solidarity among communities, while making our politics less polarized and less zero-sum. Ranked choice voting should become the norm for state and federal elections as well. The Council also recently passed a bill I cosponsored to simplify the instructions and ballot design in ranked choice contests.

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?

Yes

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 work with Super PAC's, nor do we take money from special interests such as big real estate, fossil fuel companies, police unions, or lobbyists.

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?

Yes

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.

As Contracts Chair, one of my chief concerns has been to reform the bureaucratic city contracting system, which has required collaboration with the Comptroller and other offices. Delays and inefficiencies here have been particularly harmful to nonprofits and recipients of human services.

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?

Oversight is a crucial function of the Council, and needs to function and be seen as a normal part of governing- not a political weapon or a form of retribution. The Council needs to scrutinize public spending and appointments, and its members need to be responsive to their constituents, not corporate special interests.

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 would like to see the CCRB more independent of the police Commissioner's office, and their rulings need to be made binding. The CCRB also needs more funding, however the Mayor cut their budget by 3% last year with more cuts being possible.

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)?

These agencies have not provided adequate oversight. Consolidating their functions would be a good starting point. CCRB rulings must also be made binding, and the CCRB needs to have more prompt access to evidence.

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 efforts are a start, but have not gone far enough. More funding is needed for human services and community alternative programs. The city has also failed its most vulnerable residents by responding to homelessness with sweeps and forced institutionalization.

Furthermore, I am currently co-sponsoring bills on issues including:

Reforming how the NYPD responds to public school students facing emotional crises

Mandating a report on how the NYPD treats and prosecutes victims of domestic violence

Prohibiting the Strategic Response Group from being used deployed to nonviolent protests or demonstrations

Prohibiting the collection of minors' genetic data without proper consent

CITY COUNCIL RULES

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race)? 7,500

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals? \$250,000 (with full matching funds. we have raised in excess of the spending cap and are done fundraising for the year.)

How many individual donors do you have? 488

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

NY-WFP, The New Majority, NYC Carpenters, Laborers Local 79, Mason Tenders Union, Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club, and more to be announced soon!

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