

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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	Lynn Schulman
Running for Council District number	<input type="text" value="29"/>
In which primary	<input type="text" value="Democratic"/>
Age	65
Education	Harvard Executive Leadership Program, Brooklyn Law School, New York University
Occupation	Member of the New York City Council

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Lynn Schulman is the City Council Member for District 29 in Queens, covering Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Rego Park and Richmond Hill.

Lynn is a long-time community and LGBTQ activist. Born in Elmhurst, Queens, Lynn grew up in Forest Hills and has been living there for more than 40 years.

Since Junior High School, Lynn sought community service as a way to help her family, friends, and neighbors. She was also civically engaged and became involved in her first political campaign at the age of 16. Lynn continued to stay active in the political realm as a volunteer and campaign staff member while finishing college at NYU and then going to Brooklyn Law School.

In her Forest Hills community, Lynn served as a Vice-Chair on Community Board 6 for more than 20 years. She is also a former member of the 112th Precinct Community Council and the Board of Directors of the Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Additionally, Lynn served as an appointed member of the Community Education Council for District 28, where she focused on combating school bullying, increasing student access to music and art programs, and enhancing education opportunities for the youth in our city's public school system.

With decades of leadership in health care advocacy and progressive causes, Lynn ran for City Council because she had a vision for how to bring about the change we need in our Queens communities. Lynn has devoted her career to public service and held a broad range of executive positions in government, private industry, and the non-profit arena.

Just prior to being elected to the City Council, Lynn worked on health care, community, and social service issues as a Community Liaison for the Speaker of the NYC Council. In addition to law school, Lynn is a proud graduate of the Senior Executives in State and Local Government Leadership program at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Lynn has brought her life experience, life values, and robust policy agenda into the City Council. She looks forward to continuing to improve the quality of life for everyone within her Council District.

Website

<https://lynnschulman.com>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/Lynn4NYC>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/lynnschulmannyc>

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

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

Yes

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?

I am proud of my service to constituents. In addition to having a robust staff working on constituent issues, I have hosted several workshops in the district (virtual and in-person) on healthcare, public safety (including hate crimes), and services for seniors. Major problems in the district include street homeless and general quality of life issues such as street cleanliness.

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 most important bill that I introduced and just passed is the first of its kind citywide diabetes reduction plan, Intro 918-A. This bill is modeled on the 90-90-90 plan introduced by UNAIDS, to reduce HIV/AIDS during the height of the epidemic. This legislation has aggressive goals to reduce the incidence and impact of Type 2 diabetes, a deadly chronic disease which is preventable and reversible.

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 have been a supporter of good government for over 30 years. Some key issues I have supported include: term limits for elected office (most notably City Council), a more independent Board of Elections, making the City Council a full-time job (it was a part-time job in the past), public financing of political campaigns, more community input into the Council ULURP process, making the NYPD more accountable, and other reform issues.

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: Healthcare: The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest healthcare crisis of our lifetime and tragically, it exposed the deep vulnerability of the borough of Queens. Over the past two decades, Queens has lost an alarming number of hospitals and other healthcare resources. The consequences have been devastating. As a Council Member, I have been working on legislation that will require all development projects under land use review to include a hospital impact assessment in addition to the required environmental assessment. Not only are we in desperate need of additional hospital capacity, but we need a healthcare system that can provide affordable preventive and primary care, and also have the ability to react to acute issues such as the current pandemic. I am a proud sponsor of the Healthcare Accountability and Consumer Protection Act which will make hospital costs more transparent and create an Office of Healthcare Accountability. Further, I introduced the first Citywide Diabetes Reduction Plan which was just passed by the Council and will make New Yorkers healthier. As someone who has had first-hand experience working in the healthcare field (10 years at NYC Health + Hospitals), and who has worked on health issues in the City Council, I will continue to move these issues to the forefront to ensure our lives aren't put in jeopardy because of the government's inability to make smart decisions about our public health.

Second: Education: Our children only get one shot at a great education. Sadly, the coronavirus pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on our children's learning. Moving forward, we need to afford parents and teachers alike the support they need to ensure all students are given every opportunity to succeed. First, New York City needs to fast track and expand its 3-K program throughout the city. Second, we need to demand reduced class sizes, which have been proven to improve learning. We must also invest in daily physical education which in addition to its health benefits, also yields better learning. We have flagrantly ignored physical education since the pandemic began. Also critical is the investment in our schools' dual language programs. Studies show that bilingual students have increased cognitive development, better academic achievement, and increased economic opportunities. In the most diverse city in the world, we should ensure language is not a barrier to a quality public education. Last, I am proud that the Mayor's Office listened to my advocacy to keep gifted and talented programs and expand them citywide. We now have to add gifted and talented programs to all local elementary schools. Speaking with parents, educators and the kids themselves will be critical to ensuring everyone has a voice in this important aspect of their education.

Third: Support Our Retirees and Seniors: Our seniors and retirees deserve to live with dignity and support. COVID-19 exposed the lack of adequate services and programs for our older adults. District

29 has one of the highest concentrations of seniors in the city - with real needs for healthcare (including mental health) and affordable housing, as well as those struggling with food insecurity. As a member of the City Council Aging Committee, I have increased funding for senior centers, advocated for enhanced transportation services and sponsored legislation to enable seniors to more readily access medical treatment and services. I have also hosted forums on elder abuse and elder scams. In my next term, I plan to bring senior housing to my district and work to make sure our seniors and retirees are able to remain in the neighborhoods where they live and have raised their families.

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 believe the relationship between the City Council and Board of Elections can be improved. I believe there should be a local elections executive director appointed by the Mayor upon recommendation by a new board that is chosen by the Mayor and the City Council. As a member of the Government Operations Committee which has oversight in this area, I plan to pursue this issue with the Chair and Committee members.

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 am generally supportive of moving NYC's municipal elections to even-numbered years, which would increase turnout, put less stress on election officials, and save money. I think more study of this proposal needs to take place to ensure there are no unintended negative consequences. I also support other efforts to boost voter turnout, such as no-excuse absentee voting.

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 support Ranked Choice Voting. I think voters appreciate that this saves us the time, energy, and money that goes into run-off elections. We need to ensure that instructions are easily accessible in multiple languages to ensure people understand how Ranked Choice Voting works.

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 think the concept is one worthy of exploration, but believe this is an area that needs much more study, especially from the aspect of how this would work in NYC which has a unique and complex election system.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve elections and voting or increase competition in New York City's political system. Or, if you ran out of room in the fields above, you may continue your answers below.**

As a member of the Council, I have sponsored legislation to expand language access for elections and for ranked choice voting.

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?

Candidates are not allowed to be involved in, or have knowledge of Independent Expenditures. According to public filings with the Campaign Finance Board, it appears that Independent Expenditures were done in favor of my candidacy.

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 believe there are several reforms that can be made with regard to the city’s public financing system.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to strengthen New York City’s campaign finance system. Or, if you ran out of room in the fields above, you may continue your answers below.**

I am in the process of collaborating with my Council colleagues on potential reforms, including overhaul of the CFB database which is outdated.

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 Chair of the Health Committee, I have used my oversight function to improve response to several recent crises, including COVID-19, polio and Monkeypox, and on important health matters such as women’s health and LGBTQ+ health. I also make sure that I am prepared for hearings of the Committees where I am assigned so I can ask pertinent questions and get information on the record.

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?

As a Council Member, I am very invested in being an ethical elected official and running my office in an ethical manner. I am someone who errs on the side of caution and periodically check-in with the Council’s Office of General Counsel and the Conflict of Interest Board if I have any questions.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve ethics in New York City government. Or, if you ran out of room in the fields above, you may continue your answers below.**

This is an area that is regularly discussed within the membership of the Council and with the participation of the Office of the City Council Speaker.

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?

To ensure that penalties are appropriately applied, there should be recourse when the recommendations of the Civilian Complaint Review Board are not followed.

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)?

To ensure that independent oversight bodies can effectively respond to wrongdoing and hold bad actors accountable, we should explore providing these bodies with the right to appeal to another office, such as the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, to make a final decision when the bodies come into disagreement with individuals like the Police Commissioner. We also need to ensure that the Civilian Complaint Review Board has the resources it needs to do its job.

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?

The first responsibility of government is to make people feel safe. Public safety is a complex issue that requires many levels of investment, including funding for violence interrupters, increased mental health services, NYPD involvement, and input from our community partners.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve police accountability, oversight of the NYPD, and police-community relations. Or, if you ran out of room in the fields above, you may continue your answers below.**

True community policing is lacking in many areas. Since being elected, I have been working with the NYPD to get the local precincts in my district to be better partners with the community. I have had some success and am continuing to work on this issue.

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 would like to see the City Council website be re-designed to improve bill tracking, as well as potentially setting up an email alert system. I also would like to see Administrative reforms in the processes of the Council to make it easier to serve our constituents.

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race)? Our current win number is 6,500.

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals? Thus far, I am happy to report we have raised over \$65,000 and received \$162,518 in public funds, close to the amount needed to max out. I intend to raise the limit established by the NYC Campaign Finance Board, and spend the limit allotted to City Council candidates which is \$207,000.

How many individual donors do you have? Under the rule of the Campaign Finance Board, all donors must be individual with the exception of PACS and unions. The majority of my donors are individual.

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

The endorsement process is ongoing. I expect to earn the support and endorsement from a wide coalition of elected officials, community leaders, advocacy groups, and labor unions as I did in my 2021 race. Thus far, I have received the endorsements of The New Majority NYC, LPAC, the National LGBTQ Victory Fund, Borough President Donovan Richards, Congresswoman Grace Meng, Congressman Ritchie Torres; Assembly Members Andrew Hevesi, Dan Rosenthal and Jenifer Rajkumar; NYS Senators Leory Comrie and John Liu; with many other endorsements expected in the near future.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.



1st Mailer.pdf



Palm Card.pdf

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

It has been such a thrill and humbling experience to represent the community I grew up in. During my brief time in office so far, I have succeeded in shifting the top down paradigm of creating government policy to an approach that makes equity and justice the guiding principles in all decision-making.

As an out Lesbian and a recent breast cancer survivor, I know the experience of those who are marginalized in our society - older adults, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+, Jewish and AAPI communities, and many others. Every day I serve my district as its Council Member, I make sure to look out for those most vulnerable in our society, prioritizing improvements to quality of life in the district and working to ensure that people feel safe, whether in their homes or on the street.

As I seek to be re-elected and represent a new constituency via redistricting, I very much look forward to continuing to make our city a better place and enhance the well-being of all New Yorkers

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