

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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	Kristin Richardson Jordan
Running for Council District number	<input type="text" value="9"/>
In which primary	<input type="text" value="Democratic"/>
Age	36
Education	Brown University, BA in Africana Studies and Literary Arts
Occupation	City Councilmember
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement	

Kristin for HARLEM (City Council 2021 Campaign), LT-ACT (Lenox Terrace Tenants Association), Sokka Gakkai International, ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition

Website www.jordanin23.com

Twitter N/A

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Kristin4Harlem>

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?

I am most proud of my constituent services office than anything else I've done in office. Every day, we have outreach teams go out into the community and proactively hear about issues our constituents face. Our office also consistently closes over 85% of all constituent cases each and every month. The biggest issue revolves around housing: from harassment, to eviction prevention, to maintenance issues, to finding affordable housing. To assist with this, we work with the CUNY School of Law to provide legal assistance to our constituents, as well as having relationships with organizations like Palante, Legal Aid Society, and more.

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?

This is a hard question! For me, it would have to be Int 463, which replaces the CCRB with an ECRB that is elected by New Yorkers and has full independence from and disciplinary powers over the NYPD. Communities like Harlem are overpoliced with little accountability for wrongdoing, and as taxpayers we pay the price in the form of large settlements from lawsuits. The NYPD is long overdue for truly independent oversight, and if I had the power to force one bill into law it would be this.

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 believe I've touched upon police accountability, but overall I see local government as not being an example of good governance. Far too many processes are behind closed doors, especially with this Administration, and attempts at reform are met with disinterest at best or open hostility at worst. I've worked to push past this, signing onto many good government pieces of legislation, but the Speaker holds too much power over what makes it to the floor. For example, Int 463 was introduced almost a year ago and has little chance of making it to the floor because it is still stuck in committee. There

needs to a total rework of the legislative process in our City so the Council can be more responsive.

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: Holding Police Accountable

Second: Actually Affordable and Accessible Housing

Third: Redistribution of Wealth and Resources

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 think the relationship can be a bit too cozy, especially if incumbents have close relationships with County Parties. The Board of Elections does incredibly important work, and there needs to be a separation from County Parties and electeds and the BOE. I plan to use my power as a Councilmember to enact stricter guidelines as to conduct of members of the BOE, acceptable behaviors inside and outside of work, and increasing disciplinary measures for impropriety.

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?

This is an amazing idea and it has my full support. Low turnout elections only support party machines and their cronies, and aligning local elections to even-numbered years will increase turnout and make it easier for reform and good government candidates to win. We have an election in New York every year until at least 2031, and that leads to voter burnout on the off years. Voting should never feel like a chore.

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 I am! You have my commitment to be vocally opposed to any measures seeking to limit ranked choice voting and be a fierce advocate for what we have now. In every conversation with voters, we educate them on ranked choice and tell them that even if they have another candidate in mind they can still rank us #2 or #3. My candidacy was one of the few in which we were behind on the first ballot, but came out on top as every vote was counted. Besides benefitting me politically, ranked choice voting can mediate negativity on the campaign trail and empower voters to not make strategic votes but vote with their conscience.

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 we should! In a city like New York, where one party dominates the political process by and large, only the interests of Democratic voters seems to be catered to. If we open our primaries, all voters would have a say in our primaries, which far too often act as a de facto general election. I am always in support of more small-d democracy, and I see open primaries as indicative of small d-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?

We had little if any independent expenditures in support of our campaign, and moderate amounts of spending against us. That will be a different story this year, as real estate made a call for "Anyone but Jordan" and I anticipate a large amount of outside spending against us.

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 I do. Campaign finance laws need to be stricter, and I see bundling as a major loophole for big money to influence our elections.

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.

I think the best example of this is my work on the Sanitation Committee. Our community lost hundreds of waste receptacles, and trash and litter became even more of an issue than it was before. I challenged the Sanitation Department on why these receptacles were removed, and in a combination of pressure on DSNY and discretionary funding I restored all receptacles and even added more to combat waste and litter in Harlem.

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?

This pattern of unethical behavior from the Administration is very concerning to me. Politics and government should be for the betterment of the community, not your donors, friends, and families. I see my role as a Councilmember as making sure the Mayor and other high ranking city officials do not lose sight of this, and I think both myself and the Progressive Caucus should be instrumental in fighting for good and honest government.

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 that power should lie with an ECRB that is elected and accountable to the communities victimized by overpolicing and brutality. Right now the CCRB is neutered by the Commissioner that has total power over discipline, and that is a conflict of interest if I've ever seen one. I will ensure that this happens by fighting for Int 463 to pass; this is a big priority for me.

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)?

I think I've talked at length about this answer in above questions.

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 think this is a good start, but just that: a start. Far too often, police are a hammer and all these issues appear as nails to the police. I think there needs to be increased accountability, transparency, and community oversight on top of support of these alternatives to policing to make sure that our communities are truly safe.

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?

Like you, I was alarmed by the Speaker trying to roll back these reforms. The Council as it is right now is slow from the drafting of a bill to introducing to voting and passing it, and we should be doing what we can to accelerate this process and not decelerate it. The Council must be responsive, and that means that bills that have a majority or near majority number of cosponsors should be able to move through committees quickly and they don't right now. That, as well as distributing the power of Committee Chairs to the committees at large will work to make the Council a less centralized and more small-d democratic body, which is something we all should strive for.

PATH TO VICTORY

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

If we can maintain at least 2/3rds of our first round votes from 2021 we are confident that we can come out on top.

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

Per our last filing, we raised over \$22,000 in private donations. We are awaiting public matching funds for the next disbursement this month. Our total goals are to max out on Matching Funds.

How many individual donors do you have?

We have 298 individual donors

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 the endorsement of Voters for Animal Rights, and are seeking the endorsements of RWDSU, DC37, NYSNA, CSA, VOCAL, NYLCV, and Sunrise NYC.

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