

Candidate Questionnaire Local Candidates Committee New York City Council Elections 2019

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York City and our interest in reforming city and state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than May 1st.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York City Council, and to issue our preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election. Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. **Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.** We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: Farah N. Louis Candidate **Cell Phone:** 347-893-5464

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat **Age:** 36

Education: NYU Masters

Office Sought (including district): City Council District 45

Occupation/Employer: most recently Deputy Chief of Staff and Budget Director, Council Member Jumaane Williams

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: no previous offices held; most recent campaigns include Jumaane for Public Advocate and Jumaane for Lieutenant Governor; long-standing involvement with several local civics and democratic clubs.

(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Sam Pierre **Additional Staff Contact:** Debbie Louis

Address:

Telephone: Fax:

Website: www.farahlouis.com Email: friendsoffarahlouis@gmail.com

Twitter: Facebook:

Affirmations

Have you completed required campaign finance filings? YES

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? YES

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites of being considered for Citizens Union endorsements.)

Signature of Candidate:



Date: 4/28/19

I. POLICY QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures, and feel free to elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

1. What is your position on instituting ranked choice voting for all citywide offices, including all special elections? **Support** / Oppose
2. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? **Support** / Oppose
3. What is your position on requiring the Board of Elections to report performance metrics to the City Council that conform to the Mayor's Management Report? **Support** / Oppose
4. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters? Support / **Oppose**

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

5. What is your position on prohibiting participants in the city's campaign finance program from using public matching funds to purchase strategic campaign consulting services from firms that also provide lobbying services? Support / **Oppose**

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

6. What is your position on the following proposals enabling Council committees to function more effectively and independently of the speaker: **Support*** / Oppose ***Support most; unsure or oppose a few**
 - a. Should committee chairs have the ability to hire at least one committee staffer? **Support** / Oppose
 - b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? **Support** / Oppose
 - c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? **Support** / Oppose
 - d. Now that committee chair stipends have been eliminated, what is your position on reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues? Support / **Oppose**
7. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding? **Support** / Oppose
8. What is your position on increasing transparency of discretionary funding by requiring the list of capital and expense funds and their sponsors be provided to Council Members and the

public three days in advance of any vote, and expanding the online searchable database of expense funds to include all capital fund recipients and applicants?

Support / Oppose

9. What is your position on making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of Speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense? Support / **Oppose**

PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

10. What is your position on enhancing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) authority to initiate an investigation into reported or known incidents of police misconduct without receipt of a formal complaint? **Support** / Oppose

11. What is your position on granting the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) the authority to prosecute officers found guilty of lying during CCRB investigations? **Support** / Oppose

12. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance policy for false official statements by public officers? **Support** / Oppose

13. What is your position on requiring the Police Commissioner to explain divergence from NYPD trial judge and CCRB disciplinary recommendations and to make the explanation public? **Support** / Oppose

BUDGET REFORM

14. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for:

- a. borough presidents? **Support** / Oppose
- b. The Conflicts of Interest Board? **Support** / Oppose
- c. The Public Advocate? **Support** / Oppose
- d. Community boards? **Support** / Oppose

15. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining and limiting units of appropriation? **Support** / Oppose

16. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget? **Support** / Oppose

17. How do you feel the reformed bill drafting process is going under the enacted 2014 Council Rules Reforms and do you think we need a more independent process similar to New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?

Since the Bill Drafting Unit was inaugurated, it's been a great help to the committees' counsels as well as the Members in answering technical questions on bill drafting. I'm not yet of the belief that a new process or structure needs to be added to improve bill

drafting or to add any further independence from the members.

18. What specifically will you do as a City Council Member to ensure New York achieves a full and complete Census count in 2020?

The need for a census count that includes responses from as many residents as possible is critical. I plan to make my office and staff available for use by the City to push information out on the counting mechanisms as well as publicly encourage all community groups and civics where I speak to spread information to their constituencies.

19. In 2016, Citizens Union helped craft and push for the enactment of a law that placed political contribution limits and disclosure requirements on nonprofits that are formed by, or affiliated with, elected officials, which helped prevent some significant features of an emerging “pay-to-play” culture in New York City. Do you have any other ideas to further limit such a culture and create a better environment where contributions, either personal or political, do not unduly influence the actions of elected officials?

Right now, there is great opportunity for discussion on how our City’s ethics rules can be further strengthened around the issues of transparency and preventing quid pro quo. From re-examining whether and how we award dollars to groups to examining the laws around the City itself having a not-for-profit arm just for issues, now is the right time to pursue greater reform.

Please use the space provided or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the issues contained in the previous pages. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

What are the top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign?

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises to evaluate your performance while in office, as well as to evaluate your candidacy in the future.

Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient, and to affix additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements. We thank you very much for your response.

TOP FIVE 2019 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

- 1. Housing: advocate for more affordable housing with a preference for district residents.**
- 2. Housing: fight to prevent zoning as a means to displace residents and change neighborhood character.**
- 3. Education: funding to repair school facilities and maintain/renovate classrooms.**
- 4. Education: increase spending on early childhood education resources (separate from UPK).**
- 5. Healthcare: advocate for greater access to quality and affordable healthcare options through funding and fighting to keep hospitals / clinics open.**

III. ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENTS

Citizens Union believes that all New Yorkers deserve to be represented by officials who work for the public interest and honor public trust. We seek to endorse a candidate who will demonstrate that they will honor the full commitment of the oath of office, and will always represent the public interest above all else. Please give us your views on this aspect of holding elected office.

This question and its spirit underpin my campaign. For the better part of the past two years, the City and State benefitted from having some of the most innovative ideas in criminal justice and civic reforms come from the 45th City Council District. Jumaane Williams took his ideas Citywide and even Statewide, seeing that laws were passed to make real headway in criminal justice reform and police-community relations. However, that sort of issue-based campaigning takes time away from the district.

My intent is to spend my full-term representing the 45th City Council District and focusing on the district's needs. It's time for a district-based approach by the Council Member holding that seat.

Moreover, my time serving the 45th City Council District as senior staff has been marked by a dogged commitment to transparent operations for the office. Participatory budgeting--especially as one of the originating Council Districts for it--was one of my most important jobs, and ensuring that the public knew all the facts surrounding how we solicited input and made decisions was essential. That is emblematic of the manner in which I intend to run operations in the office: with a full view for the public and their involvement whenever possible.

Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee, 299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007 Via email to candidates@citizensunion.org or fax to 212.227.0345 • Call us at 212-227-0342 with questions.