



Thursday, April 29, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - Comptroller

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run to be the next New York City Comptroller! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serve the public.

In the following pages, you will find open-ended questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office. The form includes sections on the public pension funds, the comptroller's auditing powers, budget, fiscal oversight and the economy, and the comptroller's role and work realtions.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for city offices, and to issue our preference for the June primary. Read more about the method, principles, and criteria of the candidate evalatuion process [here](#).

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If you wish to be considered, please submit the questionnaire by April 17 and no later than 48 before your interview.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

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If you cannot complete the questionnaire in one sitting, you can click Save and Continue Later at the bottom of every page.

Once you submit the questionnaire, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. Citizens Union will not be able to see your answers unless you submit the form. 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Your Info

Name

Alex K. Pan

Running in what primary

Democratic

Age

18

Education

High School/Currently in College

Occupation/Employer

Denison University

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

The Citizens Committee for Children
The Tzu Chi Foundation
The Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

Website

panfornyc.com

Twitter

twitter.com/panfornyc

Facebook

facebook.com/panfornyc

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

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

No

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

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

Signature



PUBLIC PENSION FUNDS

1. How will you select managers to manage various parts of the pension plans?

Selecting Managers are important to maintaining the fiscal health of our pension funds. If elected Comptroller, I will select managers that have been proven to deliver above market investment returns and have a history of taking careful measured risk in delivering high performance. We will be looking at their past 3 years of performance on funds, as well as taking a holistic approach to ensuring responsive, ethical, and steady managers are in control of our funds.

2. How would you work to reduce the appearance of or actual conflicts of interest that can arise from investment firms seeking pension business?

Conflicts of interests erode public trust. The Comptroller's Office will steer clear from both the appearance and actual conflicts as investment firms and consultants seek city businesses. Alex Pan has signed a pledge began by fellow candidate Assemblymember Weprin to not run for Mayor if in office as Comptroller. We will not be accepting donations during the term, and will not be accepting donations from investment firms or contracting firms.

3. What would you do as comptroller to improve pension investment returns? How would you limit or reduce costs associated with pension investment fees and consultants?

We'll take a closer look at strategic asset allocation as it's going to be our biggest driver towards meeting improved returns, and also moving with caution on market timing. We will assess the risk/reward benefit when picking consultants and assessing their investment fees, and take action based on the benefits we may reap.

4. Comptroller Stringer pushed pension funds to begin divesting from the fossil fuel industry. Do

you agree with that approach, and how do you propose to balance the need to maximize investment returns with the pressure to meet broader social responsibility goals?

We must do our part to fight climate change starting with our pension funds. I agree with the approach Comptroller Stringer has been taking by aiming to completely divest responsibly in the coming years. We can consider investments in other growth sectors such as sustainable energy, and balance that with our divestment from fossil fuels. Our approach will ensure that our pensions are positioned to have maximum returns in the future.

5. Is there anything else you would do to change how the pension funds are managed?

I will ensure the continued ethical management of these funds, minimize the influence of wealthy donors and contributors on the pensions of our hard-working everyday New Yorkers.

AUDITING

6. How would you utilize the comptroller's auditing power to ensure government agencies and the contracts they engage in result in cost-effective quality delivery of services? What priorities will you have to audit city departments?

I will use the Comptroller's auditing power to consistently audit city agencies and contracts to ensure efficiency and eliminate waste. I will seek to expand audits of the NYPD, especially with (hopefully) new initiatives aimed at police reform, the continued expansion of the body camera program amongst others. I will also be rigorously auditing the DOE, particularly in regards to charter school spending and ensuring compliance with standards for equal access, FOIL requests, and other standards.

7. As part of your auditing responsibilities, what would your approach be to the NYC Board of Elections? How do you propose to increase its operations and accountability to the city and its voters?

I will audit the Board of Elections to ensure fair treatment of all candidates, promote accessibility of data to the public, and make all procedures available to the public. I hope this will lower the

barriers for other everyday New Yorkers like myself to run for office.

8. How would you create greater disclosure around city-affiliated nonprofits that are increasingly supplementing the work of city agencies?

Audit and make information on city-affiliated nonprofits accessible to the public on a greater scale. They must be held to the standard when conducting work to supplement city agencies, especially if supplemented by city funds. We will make their data available and hold them accountable.

BUDGET, FISCAL OVERSIGHT, AND ECONOMY

9. How would you utilize the authority of the comptroller's office to ensure the fiscal health and integrity of city spending, especially in this moment of economic crisis?

I will rigorously audit and oversee the expansive selection of city contractors to carry out program administration, budget reviews, and additional city functions. New programs require additional spending, and I will make use of the Comptroller's economically targeted investments on projects like affordable housing that will benefit city residents now and post-pandemic.

10. In FY 2021, New York City spent \$20.5 billion on pensions and fringe benefits for City employees out of a total net budget of \$88.2 billion. What would you do to address the growing pension and health care costs borne by the city and New York City tax payers?

I will encourage examining increased taxes on the city's most wealthy residents, and look for cost-effective alternative plans in addition to what's currently in effect. We also must look at potential efficiencies to administrative costs and our use of contractors.

11. If elected, you will start your term as New York City (hopefully) begins to reopen its businesses, offices, and institutions. How will you utilize the comptroller's office to help rebuild the economic base of NYC?

I will utilize the Comptrollers office like mentioned beforehand to engage in economically targeted investments. We must address pending evictions by creating more affordable housing, and address food deserts by investing in alternatives. There is a potential in making our office spaces more green, and achieve carbon neutrality during the rebuilding phase as well as new loan programs to support small business recovery. In terms of reopening, we need to ensure safe re-openings by auditing city agencies to ensure compliance with safety standards and CDC guidelines.

MISCELLANEOUS

12. Do you believe there needs to be improvements to the comptroller's role and practices? What changes would you make to the structure or functions of the office?

I believe that the Comptroller needs to continue playing a role in ensuring the fiscal health of our city is in a good place and growing our pensions. We must be willing to challenge special interests, cautiously select contractors and firms, and increase the accessibility of information/audits. You can expect expanded PR efforts and transparency measures under my administration, greater use of economically targeted investments, and a Comptroller that is on the ground and listening.

13. 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 worked with the Citizens Committee for Children to advocate for family homeless recommendations, advance budget objectives, and a 2020 Census coalition. I have worked with Teens Take Charge briefly as they organized a protest at my high school, and I've spoken at two of their events to desegregate high schools.

14. What are the top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected? Feel free to reference an answer above rather than restate it.

First: Desegregate our schools

Second: Reform the NYPD

Third: Slash debt

15. If you have not addressed this already, in what major ways would your priorities as comptroller differ from the incumbent?

Conventional politicians are swamped by donors, lobbying firms, and special interests. Some want to do business with the city, and others have a personal agenda in mind. These candidates have to serve these dual interests which may at times cause conflicts.

I'm not your typical candidate. I'm not constrained by those same conditions, and I will serve solely the interests of ordinary New Yorkers. I will commit to serving out my term without pursuing higher office, and allow outside money to influence my role - you will see true good government.

16. In light of everything we have discussed above, why do you want to be mayor?

I am running to be Comptroller, and not use it as merely a means/stepping stone to the mayorship. Ordinary New Yorkers are important, and serving them well is my top priority.

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



Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below. You can submit the questionnaire at the bottom of the preview page by clicking SUBMIT.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. 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.