



Thursday, May 20, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Mayor

Dear Candidate,

In the following pages, you will find questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office. The form includes four sections: the pandemic and city government, elections and voting, police accountability, and miscellaneous.

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 evaluation process [here](#).

**

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.

**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Ray McGuire

Running in what primary

Democratic

Age

Education

Occupation/Employer

**Previous Offices, Campaigns and
Community/Civic Involvement**

Website

rayformayor.com

Twitter

twitter.com/RayForMayor

Facebook

facebook.com/Ray4Mayor

Affirmations

**Have you completed the required campaign
finance filings?**

Yes

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

I did not join the program

**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

THE PANDEMIC AND CITY GOVERNMENT

**1. 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 mayor's office to help rebuild the economic base of NYC?

The pandemic has been devastating for businesses and those that have managed to stay open are suffering from tremendous revenue losses and layoffs. I have a comprehensive Comeback plan to save these struggling businesses. It will include launching the Comeback Job Accelerator that will bring back 50,000 jobs through wage subsidies, allowing businesses to keep sales tax receipts for an immediate financial boost, and creating the Comeback Bank Initiative, which will provide long term, low interest loans for those that need an infusion of capital to remain open. In addition, I will provide mortgage and rent relief, expedite permits, allow businesses to cure violations before paying fines, and eliminate red tape. These measures will accelerate a robust recovery.

2. New York City is facing an economic and fiscal crisis. How would you ensure the fiscal health and integrity of city spending, while providing New Yorkers with valuable city services?

I believe the federal funding must be used to get the city back on track instead of as a one-time stimulus to cover up the city's mismanaged budget. I will review spending in each agency and look for waste and redundancies - so that as much of the federal money goes toward helping our children make up for their lost year of schooling, bringing back jobs, and repairing our long-neglected infrastructure. I am the only candidate who has been held accountable to meet a budget of this magnitude. Mayor de Blasio's \$98.6 billion budget proposal is a capstone to eight years of fiscal mismanagement. If passed, the budget would represent an expansion of nearly 32% since de Blasio's first budget of fiscal year 2015, which was \$75 billion, and a nearly 12% increase over last year's \$88.2 billion budget. He has decided to spend most of our federal aid over the next 14 months, and to use that one-time assistance to pay for new headcount and expanded programs with no plan for long-term funding. The result is that in spite of \$15 billion in new federal aid, the city will be carrying deficits for fiscal years '23 to '25 of just under \$4 billion per year. This is what happens when you elect career politicians without successful management experience. They waste what they have, kick the can down the road and jeopardize our

future. I will be ready to pick that can up. The hiring freeze initiated at the beginning of the pandemic constrained the government's expansion for the first time in almost a decade. We need to keep the hiring freeze in place and use this opportunity to trim the fat from our budget and put more of our tax dollars to work for New Yorkers. Finally, I would relaunch the PEG program - the program to eliminate the gap - by mandating across-the-board cuts of up to 5 percent, which would yield more than \$3 billion per year when fully phased in, and would close those out-year budget gaps.

3. In March 2020, Mayor de Blasio issued a state of emergency in New York City (as did Governor Cuomo in NY State) to remove any legal and regulatory barriers to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Do you have any concerns regarding the use of emergency powers by the Mayor during this crisis? How do you think city government can maintain public accountability standards at this time?

It is necessary to provide immediate assistance during a time of crisis, but not without being held accountable. I would hold myself and my senior officials responsible for achieving health, safety, and economic outcomes in a timely manner during this state of distress for many families. I will also work to eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens and bureaucracy that slow essential government services.

4. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in City Hall has been severely curtailed since city government shifted to work remotely. The next Mayor will need to decide how to adapt to the new reality. How would you propose to improve community engagement and public participation while using remote technology (in public hearings, meetings, etc.), particularly to ensure equity in participation?

We can introduce surveys and virtual town halls to constituents, so that they have meaningful ways to contribute their thoughts on making government services more effective. Outreach for these meetings and survey completion will be done in partnership with local nonprofits and in culturally sensitive ways, so that everyone has the ability to participate.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

5. Do you consider yourself a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? How will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works?

I respect the decision of New Yorkers who have already raised their voices with a vote to approve ranked choice voting for municipal elections. While I have concerns about the execution of a robust education campaign to ensure New Yorkers are aware of this change during a major election, I am doing my part by having my campaign launch a voter education effort in multiple languages to ensure everyone who is eligible can participate in the process.

6. Now that New York City has implemented Ranked Choice Voting, do you support moving to an Open Primary system (eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system)

No

Comments

Parties should only allow members to choose the nominees.

7. How will you use your power as Mayor to improve the operations of the NYC Board of Elections and its accountability to the city?

As mayor, I will work with the City Council to do proper oversight of the Board of Elections and a top to bottom review of its inefficiencies. I will call for more policies that deploy comprehensive educational campaigns to voters, that ensure all voting equipment is functional, and that hire more poll workers for understaffed sites. I will also advocate for transparency in BOE hiring practices.

8. The next mayor will appoint seven members to the city's redistricting commission. In doing so, the next mayor will have share the responsibility for shaping a fair political map for the coming decade. If elected, what objectives will you have in appointing commission members?

I will appoint members that align with my values for a fair redistricting process, who will ensure that every person's vote counts equally, and have relevant experience in navigating this issue.

9. Mayor de Blasio created a DemocracyNYC office, headed by a Chief Democracy Officer, tasked with increasing voter registration, improving voter access, promoting youth participation, and advancing democratic reforms. The Campaign Finance Board, the Board of Elections, and the Civic Engagement Commission share similar responsibilities. How would your administration organize its efforts to promote civic engagement and participation? How would that fit in your overall vision for the city?

I will work to centralize duplicative services, so that efforts to improve civic engagement and advance democratic reforms are more effective and efficient.

10. Do you support allowing the winner of a special election for a city office (except the mayor) to serve the remainder of the unexpired term, instead of only filling the position until the next general election?

No

Comments

General elections have higher turnout since their timing is more predictable, which means more voters will have a say in who represents them. However, there must be an expedient resolution of special elections, so that constituents are not left without a voice.

11. The de Blasio administration launched a citywide civic education program, Civics for All, which included a new curriculum, training for teachers, and increased student voter registration drives. Do you support maintaining Civics for All and student voter registration drives at the same capacity?

Yes

Comments

It is critical that we provide young people with civic education and stress the importance of staying

engaged.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Citizens Union has been studying police accountability and performance in New York City for more than a decade. In our reports and advocacy efforts we have urged city government to strengthen the accountability of the New York Police Department to the public and create a more cohesive system of police oversight. Previous reports include: [2016 issue brief](#), [2013 position brief on Stop and Frisk](#), [2012 report on the CCRB](#), [2008 policy statement on police misconduct](#). Citizens Union's 2021 agenda for police reform, [published as a report](#) in March, calls for establishing a Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, allowing the CCRB to appeal the Police Commissioner's decisions, making the appointment of Police Commissioner subject to advice and consent of the City Council, consolidating agencies with oversight authority, ending qualified immunity, and more.

12. Do you support appointing a Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, with the expertise and authority to monitor and supervise the Police Department on the Mayor's behalf?

Yes

13. Do you support making the appointment of the Police Commissioner subject to the advice and consent of the City Council?

No

Comments

I believe that the mayor should have full authority to appoint a commissioner - one who is committed to accountability and will impose accountability measures across the entire police department. As mayor, if I do not agree with the decisions of my commissioner, I will be prepared to direct them to take additional actions.

14. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the police department? How would you ensure penalties are imposed on police officers that commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing?

Over the last two decades, the NYPD has failed to implement the recommendations of the CCRB in more than 70 percent of serious disciplinary matters. I would expect my police commissioner to make decisions fully informed by the findings of the CCRB, and to continue to base disciplinary actions on the NYPD disciplinary matrix. In cases in which the commissioner declines to act on the recommendation of the CCRB, that information will be publicly reported - and in cases of serious misconduct, if I do not agree with the disciplinary decision of the commissioner, I will be prepared to

direct them to take additional actions. I will hold myself and my entire team accountable – and expect New Yorkers to do the same.

15. Do you support allowing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) to initiate an investigations without having to wait for an individual complaint?

Yes

Comments

I believe the CCRB should have the ability to investigate officer conduct whenever they see fit.

16. Do you support granting the CCRB prompt and full access to footage from body-worn cameras, police officers' employment history and disciplinary records and all other document and materials in the possession of the NYPD relevant to its investigations?

Yes

Comments

I will ensure that the CCRB has access to disciplinary records, body camera footage, and other evidence that will allow them to expand and accelerate investigations of misconduct. In 2019, the average time it took for the CCRB to receive body camera footage was 42 days. I will require the NYPD to produce footage in 48 hours. The CCRB has been able to substantiate complaints 31 percent of the time with body camera footage, compared to 13 percent without, and to exonerate officers in 30 percent of claims with footage, compared to 20 percent, respectively.

17. Do you support consolidating the three bodies that exercise oversight of the NYPD: the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), the Inspector General for the Police Department, the Mayor's Commission to Combat Police Corruption?

No

Comments

The different bodies share the goal of accountability and oversight for the NYPD but approach it through different mechanisms. Having checks and balances

when it comes to the critical issue of civil rights abuses and police misconduct is critical to safeguarding our system and creating trust among the citizens in our public safety institutions.

18. Do you support moving the disciplinary hearings for police officers, like those for all other City employees, to be conducted before the independent administrative law judges of OATH (Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings) rather than within the NYPD?

No

Comments

I would expect my police commissioner to make disciplinary decisions fully informed by the findings of the CCRB, and to continue to base disciplinary actions on the NYPD disciplinary matrix. In cases of serious misconduct, if I do not agree with the disciplinary decision of the commissioner, I will be prepared to direct them to take additional actions.

19. Feel free to add any other policy proposals you support in regards to police accountability, misconduct, and oversight, or to effective policing including functions, training, and community relations.

CompStat in its current form is heavily focused on criminal complaints and arrests. The consequence of such a narrow set of indicators is that it incentivizes arrests rather than addressing the root causes of crime or connecting New Yorkers in crisis to appropriate services. My expanded CompStat model will also track metrics of successful engagement by police officers and other community safety workers, including de-escalations, police responsiveness and conduct; the number of individuals diverted to treatment programs or supportive housing; and other relevant data. This expanded system will also better measure the effectiveness of other city agencies and nonprofit programs in responding to incidents and improving community safety. This will allow the city to better identify, develop and expand best practices, and will enable me to hold other commissioners accountable for their agencies' roles in improving public safety. Using data from this expanded CompStat, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and the CCRB will conduct a full review of disciplinary records to identify officers

with early indicators of violence and other forms of serious misconduct. They will utilize an early warning system to prevent patterns of behavior from escalating to excessive use of force. Some officers may benefit from targeted interventions and training, but others will simply need to be removed. Doing so will improve the overall culture of the NYPD and empower good officers.

MISCELLANEOUS

20. How would you utilize city-affiliated nonprofit organizations such as the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City in raising private revenue to supplement city agencies and programs? How would you ensure that there is sufficient transparency and accountability of funding received through such entities?

I will use public, private, and philanthropic partnerships to direct funding to programs that address critical issues and help realize our common vision for a prosperous city. I am going to work as mayor to squeeze every ounce of impact from all streams of funding and will be held accountable for outcomes as well as ensure transparency throughout.

21. 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 am not a career politician, so I will approach these issues with fresh eyes and ideas unlike the career politicians who've had their chance to solve these problems and largely failed to make the reforms our city needs.

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

My life story, management experience, relationships, and vision give me a different perspective than those who have spent years in politics. I grew up with the same economic insecurity many New Yorkers feel today. That personal story is at the heart of my candidacy. I have bold ideas for lifting our schools, saving small businesses, creating jobs, making housing more affordable, and reducing crime in a way that respects everyone's dignity. I

want every child in New York City to get the same
opportunities that I did

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.