



Sunday, May 16, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - City Council

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for New York City Council!

Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serve the public.

In the following pages, you will find questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office. The form includes five short sections: serving constituent, elections and voting, police accountability, council rules and procedures, 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 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.

**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Julie Won

Running for Council District number

26

In which primary

Democratic

If elected, which legislative conference will you join (e.g., Democrat, Republican, other)?

Democrat

Age

31

Education

Syracuse University

Occupation/Employer

Digital Strategy Consultant/IBM

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Queens Community Board 2, Queens Borough President's Complete Count Committee – Technology Action Group founder, board member of 696 Build Queensbridge, and board member of Queens Together (restaurant alliance)

Campaign Contact Information**Website**

juliewon.com

Twitter

twitter.com/juliewon2021

Facebook

facebook.com/juliewon2021

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)

Signature



SERVING CONSTITUENTS

1. For most New Yorkers, the most important thing that their council members do is provide constituent services. How would you run your office to serve your community needs? Please give specific examples.

Delivering constituent services will be the top priority for my district office and staff. As Councilmember, I will ensure that my caseworkers are diverse and representative of my district so that all constituents will feel welcome presenting their problems to our office. From fallen tree removals to interfacing with our overly bureaucratic city agencies, to permitting and the like, no problem will be too small or large for my office to handle on behalf of the residents of district 26.

2. If you served as an elected official, what did you do to help your constituents during the Covid-19 pandemic? Please be specific.

N/A, I am a first time candidate.

3. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running for office?

4 years

4. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce?

Over 1 million families in New York City lack the high speed internet they need to obtain government services, learn remotely, or look for a job. Half of

these families access the internet exclusively through their phones or frustratingly slow dial-up connections. The other half do not have internet access at all. Lack of access is attributable to two major issues: a lack of broadband infrastructure, often the result of historic redlining, and unaffordable bills. Immediately, I will fight for increased funding to amplify programs such as Queensbridge Connected, so that all NYCHA residents have access to reliable, fast WiFi, as well as NYC Mesh, which is striving to provide internet access to underserved communities. As a Council Member I will also introduce legislation subsidizing internet access for all low- and middle-income New Yorkers and providing tax breaks to businesses that open their WiFi networks to the public. However, we need a long-term solution. If elected, I will introduce legislation to begin the creation of a city-owned broadband network.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

5. How would you describe the relationship between the City Council and the New York City Board of Elections? How will you use your power as a council member to improve the operations of the NYC BOE?

The relationship between the NYC BOE and the city council is complicated by the fact that the NYS BOE does exercise some oversight. With that said, the NYC BOE is notoriously inept and complacent. From their mishandling of absentee ballots during the 2020 cycle, to the inaccessibility of early voting sites and inconsistent voting hours, it is clear that the BOE is due for sweeping reform, from the executive director down. Even 6 weeks from the most consequential municipal election in a decade, they have yet to procure software to efficiently execute ranked choice voting. As Councilmember, I will provide a tremendous level of oversight on the BOE and its managers, especially focused on expanding voting accessibility and ranked choice voting education in neighborhoods with high BIPOC and immigrant populations.

6. 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 do support ranked choice voting. During the winter and spring I organized rallies with an opponent to

combat Asian hate. These rallies were well attended, including by our other opponents. Candidates were able to realize political benefits of solidarity instead of playing a zero sum game. I think RCV allowed us to more easily organize an issue event rather than a campaign event.

As an elected official I will promote this system for state and federal offices—more New Yorkers will be likely to make use of ranked choice ballots if it is the rule and not the exception. As part of my campaign, I plan to utilize sample ballots that demonstrate how voters should use ranked choice voting.

7. The next City Council will appoint members to the city’s redistricting commission and decide whether to approve or reject the commission’s districting plans. In doing so, future council members will be responsible for shaping a fair political map for the coming decade. If elected, what would your approach be in proposing or voting to appoint commission members, and in considering proposed district maps?

I will vote for commission members that reflect New York City’s diversity, including prioritizing women and non-binary nominees. I will also look for candidates that are committed to transparency. New Yorkers have the right to know the rationale, the honest rationale, behind how districts are drawn. Finally, I will look for candidates that will push a less-biased, technology based approach.

8. 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)?

Yes

Comments

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.

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

Yes

Comments

10. 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?

I will support significant increases to the CCRB's budget. I also favor making the CCRB rulings binding, with no ability for the commissioner to overrule. I would also look to make the police commissioner's appointments to the CCRB nonvoting and advisory.

11. 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?

Yes

Comments

12. Do you support giving 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

13. 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.

I will push legislation that would sharply limit the ability of the NYPD to collect online and biometric data or track New Yorkers' online activity, including on social media. The scope of these efforts sweep up New Yorkers who have committed no crimes and are weaponized to chill free speech and protest. The negative impacts of these technologies are felt especially hard by New Yorkers of color, muslim New Yorkers, immigrants, and activists.

HOW CITY COUNCIL WORKS

One of the first items on the next City Council's agenda will be adopting its rules of proceedings. Those rules will have a substantial effect on the ability of lawmakers to advance their goals, and can send a signal to New Yorkers about elected officials' commitment to making the Council more representative, deliberative, accountable, and efficient. In the last decade, the Council took important steps to reform its rules, including a 2014 overhaul by then-Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and a 2018 administrative change by Speaker Corey Johnson. These reforms have made the body more democratic, given members a more meaningful role in the legislative process, ensured greater equity in the allocation of discretionary funding, and made drafting procedures more transparent. Still, more work is needed enable members to function more effectively and independently of the speaker, and to increase public participation.

14. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?

Yes

Comments

15. Do you support reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?

Yes

Comments

16. Do you support making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense?

Yes

Comments

17. The Council Speaker controls the allocation of a large share of the Council's overall

discretionary spending, and in 2020 it was reported that the Speaker used this power to “punish” council members who opposed the 2021 budget. How would you balance control and order in the council with reasonable dissent?

I will favor a speaker that will reform the broken discretionary spending process. A speaker that must rely on these types of political favors and punishments is failing to deliver good governance to New Yorkers. By delivering beneficial policies and programs to New Yorkers, the next speaker can minimize dissent.

18. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in City Hall has been severely curtailed since the council and city government shifted to work remotely. 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?

Remote technology for civic meetings has the ability to enhance equity. We must ensure that we provide broad language access to all meetings. For Community Board meetings, we must codify and improve the notice provided for meetings and ensure that recordings of all completed meetings are freely available online. We must also allow citizens to submit recorded verbal testimony to meetings to expand access for workers occupied during government business hours. As we return to in person meetings, we should keep remote participation available to New Yorkers.

MISCELLANEOUS

19. New York City has suffered an immensurable loss from the pandemic and its effects and the city’s economy, social life, and culture. What is your path to recovery from this crisis?

As we face the greatest economic threat to our city in decades, many of us are feeling the weight of financial insecurity. We must ensure that our economic recovery protects and nurtures small businesses and that New Yorkers have access to well-paid, family-sustaining jobs.

High and ever-increasing rent is a constant challenge facing small businesses in Western Queens, resulting in shuttered businesses and depressed wages. I will finally pass the Small Business Jobs Survival Act which would provide more fairness and stability in the commercial lease renewal process. I would go even further and pass the Commercial Rent Stabilization Act, which would allow the city to limit rent hikes on small businesses.

We must also reduce unnecessary fees and fines placed on businesses. The city should provide support, such as breaking down language barriers, so that businesses can comply with regulations and not treat them as a source of revenue. I will fight to lift the cap on street vendor permits and end the city's ticketing and harassment of these small businesses that provide joy to New Yorkers.

We must strengthen the competitiveness of our local businesses that face increasingly steep online competition. I will employ her years of experience in change management, business strategy, and start-up entrepreneurship to set up a support system to help local businesses with marketing and lower the cost of digitization in order to remain competitive in an increasingly digital market. I will promote shared commercial kitchens and cooperative maker spaces that lower the overhead for the next generation of restaurants, artists, and manufacturers.

I will expand and extend the Open Restaurants and Open Storefronts programs to create destination corridors to further the ability of restaurants and retail stores to recover, as well as expand the Open Culture program to support organizations and jobs in the arts. Open Streets provide New Yorkers with space to meet their neighbors, to learn to ride a bike, to play, to exercise, to hear music, to protest, and more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the pressing need for better labor protections for many workers. I will fight to extend the Earned Safe and Sick Time Act to gig workers and independent contractors who are currently excluded from the law. We must ensure that all workers have proper personal protective equipment and safe workplaces. I will work for local access to affordable health care and unemployment benefits for all workers. The city must do a better job of overcoming language barriers and making sure immigrant workers are receiving the protections to

which they are entitled.

Union membership in New York City, especially in the private sector, has fallen to historic lows in recent years. As our economy recovers, we must ensure that our unions are able to bounce back and expand their membership. We must expand apprenticeship opportunities and programs that mentor high school students in high-skill, high-wage work. I will push city policies that incentivise and require employers to sign labor peace agreements to facilitate unionization. I will champion an expansion of prevailing wage legislation, and will support development projects that utilize union and community labor. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how valuable unions are in their ability to protect their workers' health and well-being.

20. 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've been serving with 696 Build Queensbridge as an advisory board member since their founding. We are a local non-profit based in the Queensbridge NYCHA that advances the work of violence interruption and prevention, as well as community-focused youth outreach, financial literacy education, and civic engagement. 696 Build Queensbridge employs people from the community who have suffered within the criminal justice system themselves, to deter other members of the community from meeting the same fate, and keeping our communities safe through a non-violent, holistic model of restorative justice.

21. 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.

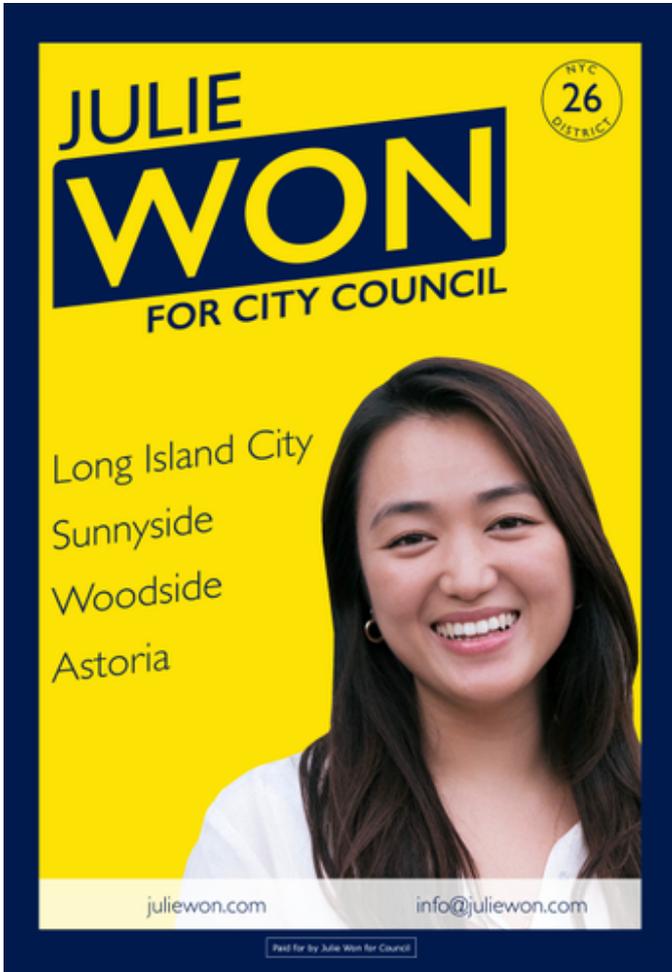
First: Ensuring a just recovery from COVID-19 by supporting small businesses and workers, see answer #19

Second: Digital equity, see answer #4.

Third: Funding a Green New Deal for housing to address NYCHA's capital needs, retrofit our public housing with sustainable technology, and enhance livability. Additionally, I will focus on creating paths to home ownership for working class New Yorkers by supporting reforms to the ULURP process and pushing for new limited-equity coop projects.

ADDITIONAL INFO

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



Julie Won Bio.docx



Short Form Policy (Website).docx

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I've attached my bio and short form policy points (full policy plans are available on my website). I am a proud immigrant and naturalized citizen fighting for the underserved and marginalized in my

community. If elected, I would be the first ever Korean American city councilmember, as well as the first woman and woman of color to represent this district. As such, my campaign is powered by the people I seek to represent; 70% of my campaign donations are from BIPOC donors, and I reject all donations from big real estate interests, fossil fuel companies, lobbyists, corporate pacs, and police unions. Our campaign has so far been endorsed by Assemblyman Ron Kim, State Senator John Liu, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, APALA-AFL-CIO, New American Leaders Action Fund, New York Pan Asian Democrats, and Women of Color for Progress.

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 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.