



Monday, May 10, 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)

We thank you very much for your response.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Your Info

**Name**

Hector Robertson

**Running for Council District number**

35

**In which primary**

Democratic

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

Democrat

**Age****Education****Occupation/Employer****Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement****Campaign Contact Information****Website****Twitter****Facebook****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.**

The Office of Constituent Services (OCS) was created to serve as an advocate for individuals who receive services from their City Council representative. My office will provide a range of support to constituents to help constituents access services either through government agencies or nonprofit service providers. These services will be provided via phone, correspondence or e-mail. My office will make every effort to cut through the red tape and help connect you with the services or resources the constituents may need.

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

I have not served as an elected official. However, I worked within my community to assist neighbors by delivering boxes of food to the elderly sick and the shut-in and those who need food during this pandemic.

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

I have lived in the district for over 30 years.

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

I would like to introduce legislation to make it illegal for building owners to move forward with housing court proceeding without tenant having legal representation for free for those that cannot afford it.

## 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 BOE should be modernized and operate in the 21st century. The agency should operate more professionally. The leadership of the BOE are less-than-competent ways. I would replace the head of the BOE and secure new contract with vendors and hold those vendors accountable when they screw up. The buck must stop with the leadership.

**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?**

This is my first district political run. I will be better positioned to answer this question after the election is over.

**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 would ensure the Commission appointments continue to represent members of diverse racial minority groups so that they will continue to have a voice within city government. I would also make sure that the process and criteria required by federal law, the 2020 US Census Bureau data, and the New York City Charter are followed.

**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)?**

No

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**

I think the police Commissioner has to interact with the entire city and it's citizens and each City Council member should have a vote in appointing the police Commissioner.

**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?**

City Council members should be able to vote on who should be the police Commissioner and therefore, be accountable for the discipline of police offices that break the city rule of law. It seems tome that strict legislation needs to be enacted to hold individual police officers accountable for their actions. I would also go as far as supporting legislation that develops a detail city database that can be shared across the country to ensure police officers that are convicted or fired are not hired by other police department in a different county, city or state.

**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.**

## **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?**

No

**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 always thought that discretionary funding should be distributed evenly across each district to prevent the Speaker from having power over the distribution of the funds. I would advocate and get support from my colleges for a change on how the discretionary funding are allocated and eliminate any control from the Speaker.

**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?**

My office will get the word out on all zoom meetings for those that have computers and will use a mailing list to provide updated information for those that do not have computers.

## 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?**

We should support more individuals who want to start their own business and make it easier to have city agencies help with expediting paperwork. For

the existing businesses, we should also do the same. NYC thrives from the tourist industry. all efforts should be concentrated in investing in the tourist industry.

**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.**

Have not involved in any of these areas.

**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: BOE reform - see above

Second: CFB reform - there are many issues with the CFB. As a City council member, i will propose to overhaul the agency and make changes to the way in which they operate and some of the process they use. Too many complaints have been recorded on the way they conduct their business and we need to reform the agency.

Third: Development re-zoning - communities must have a voice in how rezoning affects their communities. I will make sure that community boards have larger voice even it means to amend the city charter.

## **ADDITIONAL INFO**

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

**What else would you like us to know about yourself?**

**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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org).