



Saturday, April 17, 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](#).

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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 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.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Kim Moscaritolo

**Running for Council District number**

5

**In which primary**

Democratic

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

Democrat

**Age**

42

**Education**

Bachelor of Science in Telecommunications from the University of Florida

**Occupation/Employer**

Full Time Candidate

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

Since 2015, I have served as Democratic District Leader in the 76th AD, contributing to a 32% surge in Democratic voter registration and advocating for ethics reform and transparency in our county party. I was a founder of the Four Freedoms Democratic Club, a local club focused on inclusivity and organizing around progressive issues on the Upper East Side. I founded Yorkville Buy Local, an advocacy group focused on promoting and protecting our local small businesses, and I helped found the White Roof Project, a local nonprofit aimed at combating heat risk and climate change in my community — in a few years, we painted half a million square feet of roofs white in an effort to cool down our city. I served as President of the Manhattan Young Democrats in 2012, and Legislative Chair of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence in 2015-2016, where I successfully lobbied our state legislature for gun safety legislation. I am proud to have been a part of dozens of campaigns to elect real progressives to all levels of government as a volunteer: I've organized phone banks, canvasses, postcard and letter writing, petitioning, and more. I'm a regular volunteer at the

82nd St Green Market on the Upper East Side, and have also volunteered at Carl Schurz Park, the Yorkville Common Pantry, the Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, and with the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association.

## Campaign Contact Information

### Website

[www.votekim.nyc](http://www.votekim.nyc)

### Twitter

@kimmosc

### Facebook

@KimForCityCouncil

## 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.**

Constituent services are incredibly important. I

would follow the lead of our great local leaders, like Council Member Ben Kallos and State Senator José M. Serrano. CM Kallos hosts First Fridays, allowing any constituent to visit the office (or join a Zoom during the pandemic) to share concerns and ask questions. Senator Serrano often hosts mobile office hours throughout parts of his district. I would implement both of those initiatives as a Council Member. I would vary times and days of the week of meetings to accommodate my constituents' varying schedules. Additionally, I would focus significant resources on constituent services in my office, and ensure that our staff is representative of the community it serves, including having proper language interpretation services.

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

Although I have not served in public office, as District Leader, I worked with the COVID Foundation to raise money and assemble PPE Kits for residents of East Harlem, Yorkville, and Roosevelt Island. We assembled and distributed over 200 kits. I also worked with my fellow District Leader Ben Wetzler to create an online listing of local small businesses that were open and providing services. I regularly volunteered at the Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center with Meals on Wheels and at the local green market.

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

12 years

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

I would introduce legislation to create an independent process for investigating harassment in city government, particularly within the City Council.

## **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?**

I believe the relationship between the City Council

and the New York City Board of Elections could be dramatically improved, particularly in the areas of communication and transparency. I have talked extensively about this issue in my policy platform, which includes an entire portion on restoring trust in government, in part by reforming the Board of Elections. While many of the BOE's issues can only be fixed at the state level, as Council Member I would:

1. Demand a minimum set of qualifications for all BOE Commissioners, Democratic or Republican, to avoid favoritism and corruption in appointment.
2. I would implement real oversight of the BOE by city government, and insist on consequences for lack of compliance.
3. I would tie funding of the office to major structural reforms, and lobby state legislators to implement true reform by removing partisanship and professionalizing the Board of Elections.
4. I would ensure that my office communicates information about upcoming elections and changes in voting to my constituents.

**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?**

Yes, absolutely. I fully supported the switch to Ranked Choice Voting in the 2019 ballot measure, because RCV gives voters a greater say in who represents us, and historically has elected more women to government, which is extremely important. My campaign recently hosted a Ranked Choice Voting Education Weekend of Action, with over 50 volunteers participating, to educate voters on the new system, through canvassing, flyering, phone calls, relational conversations, and digital actions, and publicly called on the BOE and CFB to do more to educate voters. My campaign is working to ensure that voters are informed on RCV as an important part of our campaign, because we believe it's crucial to empower voters to make their voices fully heard in June and combat misinformation. As Council Member, I would use all powers at my disposal to ensure that the city is educating voters, through town halls, public service announcements, and building coalitions with local community groups that already have the trust of community members to get the word out.

**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 believe we need a fair and impartial redistricting commission. To that end, I will work to appoint experts who are impartial, to ensure that partisanship does not play a role in redistricting, and that certain candidates or incumbents are not favored in redistricting. I would ensure that the redistricting commission is fully funded to have all of the tools at their disposal to create impartial maps, and advocate for more binding power of the maps that the commission draws. I would advocate that the commission have proper representation from all boroughs and reflect racial, language, and gender demographics of the city. I would advocate for decreasing population deviation between districts to mitigate substantive manipulation. I would also be open to considering new data tools that can draw districts based on new census data impartially. Most importantly, I will advocate that districts represent real, cohesive communities.

**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

Though I am always open to learning more, I do not currently support open primaries. I would be open to making it easier to change party registration, such as moving the change in party registration date closer to the election date (this year, the date was February 14, 2021, which was far too early because many voters did not realize that there is a primary until later in the election cycle). I also would explore Semi-Closed Primaries, which FairVote describes as “unaffiliated voters may choose which party primary to vote in, while voters registered with a party may only vote in that party's primary.” This eliminates concerns about non-party voters “raiding” a party’s primary.

## 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 do believe that requiring advice and consent of the City Council would create more accountability for the Commissioner and the NYPD.

### **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 believe we should eliminate the Police Commissioner review of CCRB recommended sanctions, thereby making CCRB recommendations binding.

**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?**

No

**Comments**

Although I understand the arguments in favor of this proposal, I worry that without proper oversight, this consolidation could further entrench the power of the NYPD. So I am not entirely opposed to the idea, but would need to see assurances of true independence and transparency before supporting such a consolidation.

**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.**

In addition to what has already been discussed, I would work to implement a program modeled on Denver’s Support Team Assistance Response program, which sends a mental health professional and a paramedic to some 911 calls instead of police. I am a strong proponent of removing police from schools and traffic stops.

## **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**

I fully support this proposal. I believe that bills with majority support should make it to the floor for the vote.

**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 believe we should eliminate member items. Funding for community groups should be based on a set of objective criteria, and while Council Members should certainly have input in the process, leaving sole discretion of disbursement to a Council Member only increases the possibility of favoritism or corruption. It also increases the possibility of retribution, as mentioned in the question. I would support community discretionary

funding on an objective set of criteria, and make sure we are prioritizing disinvested communities in our funding.

**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?**

One of the few bright spots of this pandemic has been the use of remote technology. Participation in public meetings has increased dramatically, and so I believe we must keep remote participation as an option, even when we return to in person meetings. I would allocate resources for childcare for all public meetings so that parents can participate. Finally, I would work to schedule meetings on various days and at various times, in order to accommodate non-traditional schedules.

## **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 need a true WPA for the 21st Century, with major investments in healthcare, small businesses, education, the arts, and so much more. At the city level, we will need to work to improve our hospital system, offer relief to workers and tenants, and completely rethink our streetscape in this new era of social distancing. We also need a major focus on affordable housing, our public transportation infrastructure, and the effects of climate change. My approach to all of these will involve reaching out to stakeholders and experts, and creating workable solutions. We need to think big as we face these challenges, and advocate for the city at the state and federal level.

**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 have been a good government proponent for years. In 2013 I testified in support of campaign finance reform at the state level. I worked with the Vote Better NY campaign in 2016 to support election reforms like early voting, online voter registration, and better ballot design. In 2012, as President of the Manhattan Young Democrats, I worked with our Social Justice committee to pass a resolution in support of the Community Safety Act. As Democratic District Leader, I have advocated for more transparency in party politics and pushed for ethics reform, especially to ban paid lobbyists from county party positions.

**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: I will work to protect small businesses. To that end, I will co-sponsor the Small Business Jobs Survival Act, and also work to crack down on tech giants that exploit small businesses and workers.

Second: We must fight for climate resiliency. I will demand proper oversight to ensure that we are working towards the goals of the Climate Mobilization Act. Namely, cutting climate emissions 40% by 2030 and more than 80% by 2050. I will fight any efforts to weaken the legislation. I am fully supportive of the Renewable Rikers Act. I will work with my colleagues to implement the provisions of the law as quickly as possible, and to achieve Citywide goals of 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Third: We must invest in public goods. I will fight to allocate more funding within the city budget to our parks, libraries, NYCHA, and schools.

**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?**

I'm running for City Council because we've seen what happens when the most powerful figures in New York City are left unchecked, from a botched COVID-19 testing and vaccine rollout, to failed school re-openings. If we're going to recover from COVID-19 and get New York City back on its feet, we need accountability – not more of the same failed leadership. I'll fight for a just COVID-19

recovery: real investments and improvements to our healthcare system, and better oversight of our hospitals. I'll fight to make sure our first responders have the protective equipment they need, and that patients are receiving the best possible care. I'll fight for our local small businesses. In 2019, I founded Yorkville Buy Local to promote and protect our local mom & pops, because I saw how our community was affected by empty storefronts. I'll make sure we're reducing the burdens on small business owners, supporting workers in our local economy, and cracking down on predatory tech giants. I'm also the one candidate in this race who has a substantive platform for transparency and ethics reform in government, to ensure that City Council works for all New Yorkers, not just the most rich and powerful – such as ensuring that bills with majority support make it to the floor for a vote, and that there are strong, independent procedures for investigating harassment in government. We need accountability, transparency, and independent leadership to fight for the brighter future we know is possible. I will fight for real investments in our public good, to make sure that government works for all New Yorkers, especially our most vulnerable neighbors.

**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).