



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](#).

**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Tricia Shimamura

Running for Council District number

5

In which primary

Democratic

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

Democratic

Age

32

Education

B.A. Kenyon College, MSW New York University

Occupation/Employer

Columbia University

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I am incredibly proud to serve as the 1st Vice Chair of Manhattan Community Board 8 as well as the Co-Chair of the Parks and Waterfront Committee. I am a member of the East River Democratic Club, the Manhattan Democratic County Committee, and the Four Freedoms Democratic Club, the latter of which I formerly served as the Chair of the Diversity and Outreach Committee. I'm currently a member of the East 72nd Neighborhood Association, and I formerly served as a Board Member of Friends of the East River Esplanade. In 2017 I founded a 501(c)4 organization called She Will Rise (shewillrise.nyc), which is working to create a diverse pipeline of New York City women to become the next generation of leaders in the public and private sector. She Will Rise offers free trainings, mentorship, networking events, and professional development tools designed to encourage women to engage with their local communities and increase their awareness of who represents them and the power of their voices.

Campaign Contact Information**Website**

triciaforny.nyc

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/tricia4nyc/>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Tricia4NYC>

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.

As a former government staffer and social worker, my professional career has been dedicated to delivering services to New Yorkers in need. Whether it was working with our most vulnerable students as a school social worker, helping 9/11 first responders get access to healthcare as Carolyn Maloney's Deputy Chief of Staff, or working with undocumented and immigrant students at Columbia, I have extensive experience navigating systems to get needed services to New Yorkers.

As a City Council Member, I will work to deliver services to my constituents by employing at least one licensed clinical social worker in my office, as well as a multilingual staff in order to reach all constituents. I will also provide mobile constituent services in order to support homebound New Yorkers, and will host both virtual and in person events to reach the widest range of people.

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

While I have not yet served as an elected official, I have been actively working to serve vulnerable communities throughout the pandemic. As the Director of Government Relations at Columbia University and working in West Harlem, I've organized over 10 different virtual forums focusing on remote learning, bridging the digital divide, small business relief, absentee voting, and reducing vaccine hesitancy. I've also organized two vaccine pop up events in Upper Manhattan, focusing on incorporating a robust public education campaign and trusted community messengers to increase vaccine participation. I have partnered with elected officials, local BIDs, the NYCHA tenants association, and other neighbors to pass out PPE to families and small businesses. I volunteered with the office of the Manhattan Borough President to pass out COVID packets to families and students returning to school, conducted wellness checks on seniors, and have continued to volunteer every week at a food pantry on Roosevelt Island serving seniors dealing with food insecurity, whose needs have never been greater. In this time of crisis, I have consistently shown up for community members in need, and I will continue doing so as a City Council Member.

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

I have lived in the district for 6 years and began working in the district starting in 2012.

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

The priority of the next City Council must be our city's economic recovery, which I believe is impossible without Universal Childcare. My first piece of legislation will be legislation to enact universal childcare, including creating a sliding

scale based on income with a cap, so that no family has to decide between the cost of childcare versus the cost of food and housing. I would also call for the expansion of childcare centers through creating a matching funds program where the City could match funds to providers in order to build out more seats in our empty storefronts. By enacting Universal Childcare, not only will we allow women to reenter the workforce, we'll also be investing in our care economy that is predominantly run by minority and women owned businesses. I firmly believe that our City must lead in making childcare a right instead of a luxury.

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 City Council and the Board of Elections (BOE) is broken, and we are doing a disservice to all New Yorkers by allowing an electoral system in disrepair to continue as it currently stands. Democracy is strongest when we empower the broadest and highest number of people to participate in it. In order to properly preserve and protect our essential democratic processes, I believe we must restructure the Board of Elections by implementing a professional, nonpartisan administration. As a City Council Member, I will work to ensure that the City Council recognizes its role in enforcing laws that the BOE must follow, and increasing oversight of the daily operations of the BOE, including the establishment of new voting sites, training of poll workers, proper mailing of absentee ballots, and direct voter communication. I will advocate to Albany to reform the state constitution to make the BOE nonpartisan and increase training and expectations for hired positions.

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 - I am very supportive of the Ranked Choice Voting system. RCV encourages positive campaigning and collaboration with fellow candidates. I'm also excited that this system of

voting allows us to run issue-centric, rather than candidate-centric, campaigns. I am actively working alongside my fellow candidates to hold joint RCV education town halls. In the spirit of RCV, I also organized my fellow candidates in District 5 to support one another's petitioning processes by leading them in not challenging opponents' petitions. I have also organized RCV events with students, local community leaders, and leading nonprofit organizations in order to educate voters on their ballots.

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 that commission members should be completely non-partisan in order to ensure that the redistricting plans are as fair as possible. Potential conflicts of interest should be scrutinized - commission members must be held to a high standard. Commission members should be committed to racial and economic justice so that the gerrymandering of certain groups into districts doesn't occur. Proposed district maps should be representative of the area under consideration and inclusive of its actual diversity. I will consult with residents, advocates and good government groups when considering proposed district maps.

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 believe the City Council must immediately move to empower and strengthen the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) to determine disciplinary action within the police department. The Police Commissioner should not be involved in the process of reviewing CCRB recommendations at all. I will also support making CCRB recommendations binding, and ensuring the CCRB has the investigatory power needed to recommend appropriate actions and penalties. Moreover, I will fight to increase funding for the CCRB, so it actually has the resources to investigate and defend the rights of New Yorkers subject to police violence. This essential independent agency is one of the few entities that has no means to increase its own revenue and thus it is critical that the City increase funding. Only through serious reforms to the NYPD will we be able to move towards a more compassionate justice system that serves all New Yorkers.

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

No, I do not support the consolidation of the CCRB, the Inspector General for the Police Department,

and the Mayor's Commission to Combat Police Corruption. Consolidation would diminish the effectiveness of each respective agency, only increasing the ability of the NYPD to obstruct oversight and accountability of their department. We need police accountability and independent oversight that is free from any influence of the NYPD.

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.

The City must create a true community-informed approach to policing. I will fight to give coalitions of local community stakeholders a true voice in shaping public safety in their neighborhoods. I believe we should redirect NYPD funding to community-based early interventions, workforce development, expanded youth service programming, and structural changes to our streets and public spaces. I also believe that we must immediately remove the police presence in New York City schools. I will push the city to invest in social workers, mental health counselors, teachers, and other professionals who are trained in appropriate interventions that maintain safety and dignity to support our students. Similarly, I do not believe we can incarcerate our way out of our crisis of homelessness -- I will support the expansion of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment alternatives to incarceration. I will also work to provide wraparound supportive services, including housing, mental healthcare, counseling, and job training. Finally, I will work to take immediate steps to demilitarize the police and eliminate their arsenal of battle-weapons and vehicles.

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?

As a City Council Member, I will only support a speaker who enacts a rules package that sets a standard level of both discretionary and staff funding at a fixed level across the board, with an

open and transparent process for applying for additional funds. New Yorkers should not suffer as the result of political rivalry, and council members should be able to vote their consciences without risking needed services in their district.

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?

As a longtime member of Manhattan Community Board 8, I know firsthand that too many structural barriers exist for community members to participate in hearings and public meetings. I believe we should take a critical eye to how we can improve civic participation on the local level. The City should explore adopting a hybrid model of both in-person and remote meetings to expand and diversify community participation. Hearings and public meetings could also be held in a range of locations, more directly in communities that are too often underrepresented. We should also work to diversify the times at which meetings are held so that more New Yorkers are able to attend. Too often, language poses a significant barrier to full and equitable participation, particularly when a discussion topic is relevant to immigrant communities. I would support holding some meetings in non-English languages/with English translation, as well as providing more consistent Spanish, Chinese, ASL, and other relevant interpretation at all public meetings, hearings, and public events. Finally, we must continue to push for wider technological access and universal broadband across New York City, leveraging new federal funding to help bridge the digital divide for our under-resourced community members.

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?

COVID-19 has revealed the profound and painful pre-existing disparities in our healthcare, education, and housing systems. The first and most important task in front of us is dismantling those disparities and taking care of low-income, BIPOC communities who have faced disproportionate maternal mortality, environmental pollutants, unsafe and unstable housing conditions, and criminal legal system injustices. We cannot begin to prepare for the next wave or the next pandemic without tackling racism and classism as public health crises. These reforms include increasing our affordable housing stock, taking care of our houseless community members, improving education access, providing workforce development programmings, and ensuring that zoning and land use prioritize community input and engagement.

I am committed to creating strong interagency cooperation in our city government with a clear chain of command structure to ensure that our hospitals are better able to coordinate services, resources, and data in the face of public health emergencies. All too often, our healthcare system is extremely atomized and lacks sufficient channels for communication. I believe it is the responsibility of our local government to help support interorganizational communication and collaboration at all times but particularly in moments of emergency. We must also guarantee that hospitals maintain enough PPE and hospital beds to remain proportional with the surrounding community by including pandemic preparedness in performance metrics.

The vaccine rollout has been confusing and frustrating for thousands of New Yorkers, many of whom were disenfranchised by the lack of clear information, long wait times, and canceled appointments. Residents on Roosevelt Island in my district lacked a vaccine site on the Island and suffered from broken infrastructure that further reduced accessibility. This is unacceptable for a community where more than 25% of the population is over 65 and where a large portion of the population is composed of people living with disabilities. We should have a more streamlined, multi-lingual vaccination process with more sites located directly in our most vulnerable communities. We need more community validators, mobile vaccine initiatives, and clear messaging from both the City and State to manage

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'm proud to have personally worked on several efforts to combat voter suppression and increase turnout and engagement throughout New York City. During the 2020 election cycle, I held virtual absentee ballot town halls, worked to increase the number of early voting sites in New York City, and helped tens of thousands of students register to vote and apply for an absentee ballot in their home states. During the 2020 Census, I also worked with student advocates and local community partners to engage immigrant communities in Upper Manhattan, as well as employ local residents as enumerators. Finally, I'm proud to have worked collaboratively to educate voters on Ranked Choice Voting, including holding education town halls with my fellow candidates.

As a Council Member I will continue fighting for automatic voter registration, increasing early voting sites, expanding poll hours, and allowing for same day party registration. I'm also committed to ensuring the accessibility of polling sites and taking a disability justice lens to all issues of voting. Finally, I also believe in strengthening and expanding the ULURP process to include more opportunities for community input and engagement. As the First Vice Chair of Manhattan Community Board 8, I know the impact land use decisions can have on the future of our neighborhoods and I am deeply committed to increasing opportunities for community voices to be heard. I will do everything I can to ensure high and equitable participation in our essential democratic processes.

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: Universal Childcare, as outlined in Question 4

Second: Environmental justice is a critical component of my campaign. I will advocate for the transition of renewable energy, as well as the creation of a renewable municipal public power system to provide all New Yorkers with green energy. I will push for all new developments to be outfitted with renewable energy sources, as well as the retrofitting of all buildings owned by the city. Further, I will continue to push for a divestment from all fossil fuel and natural gas companies in the City pension fund. Additionally, I am supportive of a Green New Deal for NYCHA, which would center NYCHA residents as an essential partner in sustainable workforce and resiliency planning. I will call for electrifying the City's fleet, reinvesting in our composting program, and making critical gray and green infrastructure improvements to our sewage system. For the sake of all New Yorkers, but especially our low-income families, we must also take an aggressive approach to combating climate change and making strong investments in the East River Esplanade to protect these residents.

Third: Addressing the needs of our homeless families should be a top priority for any incoming legislator, and we must collectively work to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to affordable housing. Reducing homelessness means bringing true reforms and new funding to NYCHA, and increasing tenant protection measures including access to legal counsel, housing resources, and passing good cause eviction legislation in New York State. We must revise City shelter policies to adjust to remote learning and increase staffing, training, and family programming throughout the shelter system. The City should also adopt a more streamlined, humane approach to the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH). Families should not have to wait over a day to receive word on whether they qualify for shelter. Additionally, the City should increase our Section 8 voucher program, and increase the number of safe havens and supportive housing locations throughout New York, understanding that this crisis requires a multilayered, compassionate approach with appropriate social services. We must increase the range and quantity of affordable housing, in every neighborhood and at every income level to create truly diverse and inclusive communities.

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 am a proud Japanese Puerto Rican woman and, when elected, I will be the first ever person of color to represent the Upper East Side and the first ever Japanese American elected at city, state, or federal level in New York State. I am honored to have been endorsed by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, Former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, East River Democratic Club, Women of Color for Progress, The Jewish

Vote, 21 in '21, New American Leaders Action Fund, Run for Something, Progressive Women of NY, Vote Mama, the National Institute of Reproductive Health Action Fund, and over 50 community leaders. I'm also excited to have received the endorsement of Council Member Helen Rosenthal (District 6) which will be publicly released on Monday, April 19th. As a mom, a Woman of Color, and a social worker, I am deeply invested in creating a more equitable, just and resilient future for our entire City.

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.