



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.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your Info

Name

David Gold

Running for Council District number

6

In which primary

Democratic

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

Democratic

Age

53

Education

A.B. (Brown), J.D. (Columbia), M.A., Ph.D. (Univ. of Pennsylvania)

Occupation/Employer

Executive Director, Democratism

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement**Campaign Contact Information****Website**

davidgold.nyc

Twitter

davidpgold

Facebook

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

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.

My campaign is centered around advancing democracy, so that government will more fully implement the will of the people. Although this is primarily a government process issue, sometimes it implicates constituent services as well, such as when the processes of government are not working properly or fairly. In those instances, I will make every effort to aid my constituents in making government work right for them.

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 held elected office.

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

I'm a lifelong New Yorker and moved to the District in 1973.

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

I will aim to introduce the Democracy Decree, so New Yorkers can join a national vote to end the Electoral College and create fair representation in

Congress. Our current system is anti-democratic and anti-city. To create the city we want, we need to claim our fair share of power in Washington—and local legislatures must lead the way.

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 City Council has the power to approve or reject appointments to the Board by the two major parties. I would use that power to favor people who have the needed skills and experience, and who were chosen for that reason rather than because of their loyalty to the party that selected them. (The Council also controls the Board's budget, but that serves as a weak enforcement mechanism.) I would also advocate for changes to the structure of the Board to 1) decrease the power of the parties (which would require altering Article II, Section 8 of the NYS Constitution) and 2) eliminate the undemocratic practice of giving equal representation to each borough despite their disparate 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?

Yes, I support the change to Ranked Choice Voting. While no voting system is perfect, RCV is clearly more democratic than plurality voting. I will educate my constituents about RCV and will support initiatives to educate all New Yorkers about it.

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 seek to appoint members who would act independently of party influence, who are committed to transparency in process and fair

representation of our diverse communities, and who have the skills and experience to achieve those goals. In considering the proposed maps, I would examine whether that process was followed and those goals achieved.

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

Yes, given the new voting method, I support eliminating party primaries and establishing non-partisan general elections. (To be clear, some jurisdictions have “open primaries” in the sense of party primaries in which non-members of the party are free to vote in choosing the party nominee. I probably would not support that.)

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?

CCRB or another independent civilian entity should have the final say on disciplinary matters and the authority to set penalties (not necessarily the same civilian entity).

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?

Comments

Perhaps. There are reasons to consider consolidating them, but there are also checks and balances that could be lost in consolidation, so it would depend on the specific proposal.

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.

We should shift responsibilities away from armed police officers wherever possible and engage and fund other appropriate professionals, including social workers, counselors, and members of community-based organizations, to assist with non-criminal situations, such as individuals suffering from mental health crises or homelessness.

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?

Comments

I support methods for filtering legislation other than permission of the speaker.

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

Comments

If a specific proposal for fewer committees appeared likely to allow members to participate more meaningfully in fewer issues, I would likely support it. I would also support increasing efficiency by ending the practice of breaking up proposed legislation into multiple bills.

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?

The Speaker should not control a large share of the Council's discretionary spending.

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?

I would support opening public spaces with remote technology to provide wider access.

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?

Our community is at a critical juncture, a moment of suffering and anxiety, but also of rare opportunity. I'm running because there's a need for real change, and also a hunger for real change, and we have to think big and creatively about it. I'll fight in every way for affordable housing; excellent public schools; aid to local businesses; fair, effective law enforcement; environmental sustainability; better public transit; and a resurgence in the arts. But it's not enough to fight for these things in the same old ways. Our problems aren't new, and the old ways haven't solved them. I'll work for two improvements to our democracy that would dramatically improve our trajectory. One is a hyper-local voting system that allows neighbors to decide together what's most important to us and shift resources accordingly. It can address many long-standing problems, including empty storefronts, affordable housing, and more. The other is called the Democracy Decree. It's legislation I'll introduce in the City Council so New Yorkers can join a national vote to end the electoral college and create fair representation in Congress. Our current system is anti-democratic and anti-city. To create the city we want, we need to claim our fair share of power in Washington—and local legislatures must lead the way.

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 run a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization called Democratism whose mission is to advance the power of the people to shape the future. Our main project is to make the federal election system more democratic. I have also worked for voting rights and voter protection for many years, beginning in my second summer of law school, when I worked for the Brennan Center for Justice, where we sued the state of Florida for suppressing Black voters through its intentionally discriminatory felon disenfranchisement regime.

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: see answer to question 19

Second:

Third:

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 see my website, at davidgold.nyc.

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.