



Friday, April 30, 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Sara Lind

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

38

Education

BS in Political Science and Economics at UW Madison, JD at University of Chicago, MPA at Columbia SIPA

Occupation/Employer

Currently unemployed

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Community Board 7 - 2018-Present, served two terms as Co-Secretary

School Leadership Team at PS166 - 2019-Present

Broadway Task Force - 2018-Present, member and current Chair

County Committee - 2019-Present

Alternate Judicial Delegate - 2019 and 2020

Amplify Her, 2018-2020

West Side Democrats, 2017-Present

Volunteer with West Side Campaign Against Hunger,

DOROT, the Westside Federation for Senior and

Supportive Housing, and Goddard Riverside

Transport Group Theater Company, Board Member

2017-Present

HOPE Count, annual volunteer

Abortion clinic escort volunteer through my

synagogue, SAJ

Common Cause - assisted with campaign for

Ranked Choice Voting, 2019

New York Immigration Coalition - went to JFK to

assist after the Muslim Ban went into effect in 2017

Center for Arts Education, volunteer on Programs

Committee - 2018-2019

Campaign Contact Information

Website

<https://www.saralind.nyc/>

Twitter

@saraklind

Facebook

/SaraLind2021

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.

I plan to host housing clinics and legal clinics to help constituents with some of the most common concerns. I will also have a constituent services director who will field and manage constituent concerns. I also plan to hold regular town halls. In addition, I would like to pilot the use of Citizen's Assemblies.

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 do not serve as an elected official. However, as a member of CB7 we helped disseminate information to residents about resources. Personally, I volunteered to help deliver food and groceries to seniors. I also helped organize volunteers to make phone calls to seniors to check in on them and I helped distribute books to families without books in the home for remote learning.

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

7 years

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

A bill to streamline the regulatory process for small businesses who are currently struggling with onerous requirements.

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 that the BOE should be a non-political professionalized agency, similar to the Campaign Finance Board. I would support action by the Council to make this change.

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 volunteered with Common Cause to help pass Ranked Choice Voting, including by publishing an op-ed in support, giving a lecture on it at Columbia SIPA, attending press conferences and rallies, and speaking with community organizations.

However, I believe we did not go far enough: RCV should be used for the general election as well. As it is currently used, it does nothing to empower third parties.

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?

Gerrymandering should not be accepted, regardless of the political party that it benefits. I would propose or vote for commission members who are experts in the area, who are not hyper-political, and who will commit to drawing maps that accurately reflect population and are compact and logical.

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

My position on Open Primaries is not set, but it is something I would lean towards - I would want to learn more and have dialogues around the city about it.

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 CCRB should have the final say on discipline, though I am open to adapting that if the Commissioner is approved by the Council. Perhaps there could also be an appeals process or a different process for the most serious actions. In general, though, I support making the CCRB much stronger than it currently is.

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 have proposed that police officers should be required to carry malpractice insurance (similar to doctors and lawyers) and that payments for misconduct should be paid by that insurance rather than by taxpayers.

Additionally, I would like to refund communities by right-sizing the NYPD budget back to at least 2010 levels - with commensurate changes to NYPD roles - and invest that money in the community instead.

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?

A Speaker who needs to harm constituents (by reducing discretionary funds) to control members is not an effective leader. Discretionary funds are often used to fund critical services in communities, especially in low-income communities. Vindictive behavior on the part of the Speaker is unacceptable.

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 actually think that in some ways remote hearings have opened up the process. Folks who cannot take an entire day off of work to sit for hours to wait to testify can log on to a zoom from home and do work while waiting. Of course this only applies to people who are able to work from home and who have internet - but that is still more people than those who can take an entire day off and go down to city hall. However, it is absolutely the case that participation is not currently equitable. I have proposed using Citizen's Assemblies, which are randomly selected, demographically representative groups that work with a trained facilitator over a set period of time to come to consensus on a policy issue. While their recommendations aren't binding, they have been used in other places to effectively help guide policy, including making abortion legal in Ireland and working towards climate action in several places.

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?

I support a Green New Deal to create jobs, improve our infrastructure, reduce our climate impact, and build resilience for the next climate event. Additionally, reducing the police budget and investing in communities - including job training programs and apprenticeship programs - will stimulate the economy and spur recovery. It's heartening to see the city beginning to open back up and I believe that there is a lot of pent up demand that will help to boost the economy. But we must be sure that this recovery does not leave behind those most vulnerable populations.

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.

As I mentioned before, I was active in getting RCV passed in New York City - and I would love to see it applied at the state level as well! I was also active with the LetNYVote Coalition to pass the sweeping slate of voting reforms in 2019. I'm thrilled with

what we've accomplished so far, but there's still more to do. Good government reform is incredibly important to me!

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: Housing and Homelessness - I've proposed a rezoning in my district to build permanently affordable housing and supportive housing to help get folks out of the shelter system and into permanent housing.

Second: Reimagine Broadway - I've proposed a plan to pedestrianize areas of Broadway in the district, and to create an arts district and support local small businesses.

Third: Climate Action - Green New Deal, including improved public transit and supporting alternative modes of transportation.

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 have very detailed plans across a number of issue areas on my website. I encourage you to check them out! I consider myself quite a policy wonk and introducing and passing legislation would be a major goal of mine. I am also excited to work with city agencies to make improvements in my district - I am a problem-solver and I like to take action!

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.