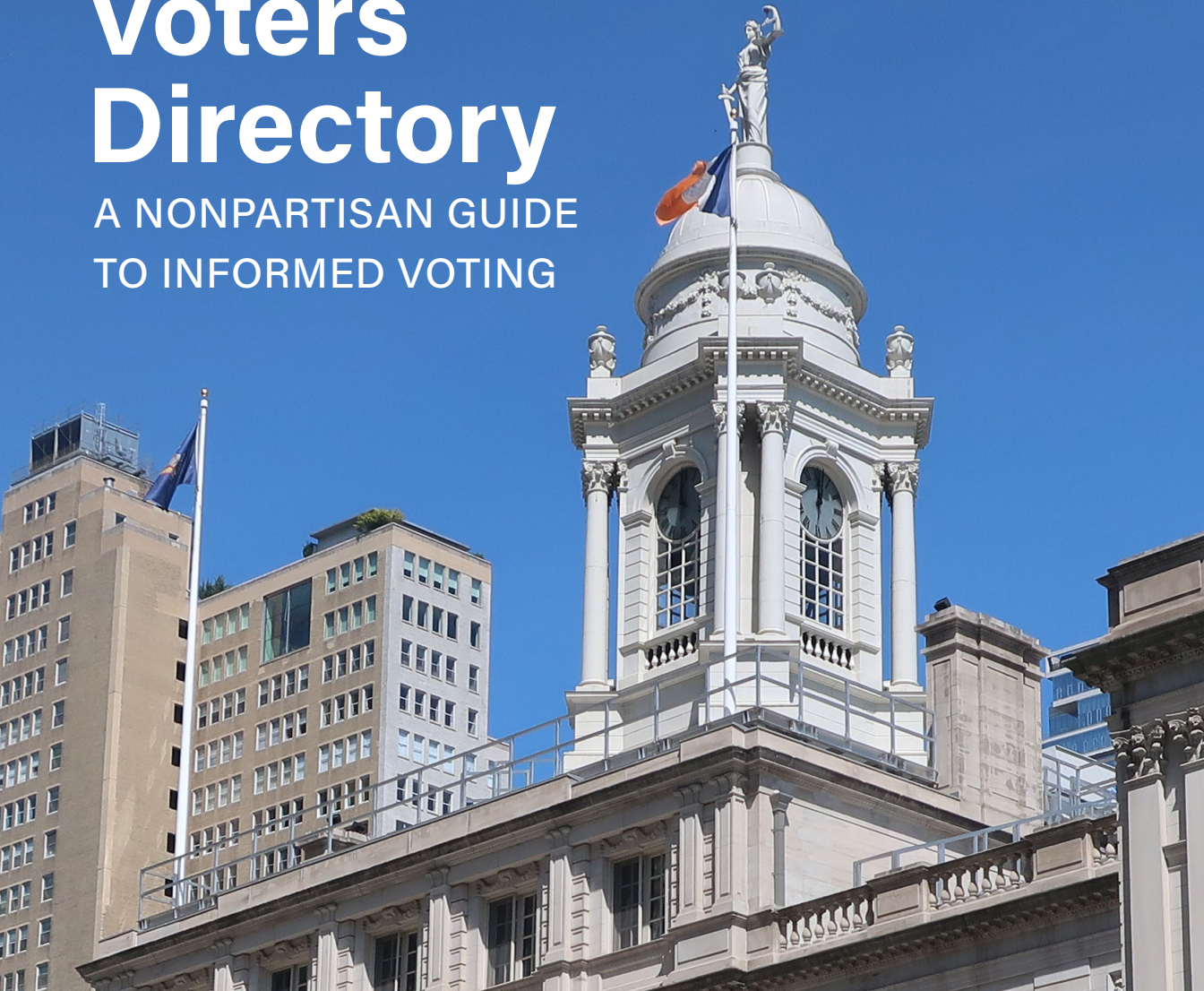


2021 Voters Directory

A NONPARTISAN GUIDE
TO INFORMED VOTING



Vote on Tuesday, Nov. 2 or Vote Early Oct. 23 – 31



**REMEMBER TO
FLIP YOUR BALLOT!**

General Election



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Citizens Union Endorsed Candidates

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2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Mayor

Eric Adams (D)

Queens City Council District 19

Tony Avella (D)

Staten Island City Council District 50

Sal Albanese (D)

The following candidates were preferred by Citizens Union in the Primary and are on the ballot in the general election:

Comptroller	Brad Lander	
Brooklyn	Borough President	Antonio Reynoso
Manhattan	Borough President	Mark Levine
Manhattan	District Attorney	Alvin Bragg
Manhattan	City Council District 5	Julie Menin
Manhattan	City Council District 6	Gale Brewer
Manhattan	City Council District 7	Shaun Abreu
Queens	City Council District 26	Julie Won
Brooklyn	City Council District 35	Crystal Hudson



Citizens Union Positions on New York State Ballot Proposals

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PROPOSAL NUMBER 1:
Amending the Apportionment
and Redistricting Process
Vote NO

BALLOT PROPOSAL 2:
Right to Clean Air, Clean Water,
and a Healthful Environment
Vote YES

BALLOT PROPOSAL 3:
Eliminating Ten-Day-Advance
Voter Registration Requirement
Vote YES

BALLOT PROPOSAL 4:
Authorizing No-Excuse
Absentee Ballot Voting
Vote YES

BALLOT PROPOSAL 5:
Increasing the Jurisdiction
of the New York City Civil Court
Vote YES

See page 6 for an explanation of Citizens Union's positions.



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CITIZENS UNION MISSION

Citizens Union (CU) is committed to reforming New York City and State government to foster accountability, accessibility, transparency, honesty, and the highest ethical standards. For the past 120 years, we at Citizens Union have devoted ourselves to holding our local governments accountable to do better in all of these areas, and we remain committed to enfranchising all New Yorkers. Some of the initiatives that we are currently advancing include the election info hub [ElectNYC.org](#), a new agenda for police accountability, and improving election administration. In all of these efforts, we have been — and will remain — nonpartisan.

Stay up to date with the latest happenings of the CU team and our work by liking our [Facebook page](#) and following us on [Twitter](#).

THE VOTERS DIRECTORY

This November, New Yorkers will vote for New York City Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, Borough Presidents, City Council, and Manhattan District Attorney. Judicial positions and one State Senate seat (Special Election) will also be on the ballot.

In addition, voters will need to vote on five ballot proposals to amend the New York Constitution.

To help our supportive Citizens Union members prepare to vote, Citizens Union has been publishing an annual Voters Directory for over a century. The current edition provides a roster of Citizens Union's endorsed candidates in several key races, and information about the rigorous evaluation process and assessments of candidates. It also includes Citizens Union's positions on the five ballot proposals.

For more information, visit the NYC Board of Elections website at [vote.nyc](#) or call (866) VOTE-NYC.

Ballot Questions and Citizens Union Recommendations

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PROPOSAL NUMBER 1, AN AMENDMENT: AMENDING THE APPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING PROCESS

This proposed constitutional amendment would freeze the number of state senators at 63, amend the process for the counting of the state's population, delete certain provisions that violate the United States Constitution, repeal and amend certain requirements for the appointment of the co-executive directors of the redistricting commission and amend the manner of drawing district lines for congressional and state legislative offices . Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

CITIZENS UNION **OPPOSES** THIS PROPOSAL

Citizens Union recommends a no vote on question 1, which would significantly alter New York's redistricting process, just a few weeks before the constitutional deadline for drawing new legislative boundaries across the state. This amendment would remove the protections that ensure no one political party could dominate the redistricting process. By lowering the needed threshold and changing voting procedures to approve new maps, the amendment effectively cuts off the minority party from having any influence on the redistricting process. Other provisions would allow the legislature to take over map-drawing on January 1st if the Independent Redistricting Commission does not approve a plan by then. Although the amendment would make beneficial changes to the redistricting criteria, some are already mandated by state law. The proposal would come into effect in the midst of redistricting, creating confusion and potentially limiting public input. Citizens Union supports a process for redistricting that is open and fair, and believes the proposed amendment clears a pathway for the legislature to reclaim influence over redistricting so they can draw lines to protect incumbents and strip the minority party's power.



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BALLOT PROPOSAL 2, AN AMENDMENT: RIGHT TO CLEAN AIR, CLEAN WATER, AND A HEALTHFUL ENVIRONMENT

The proposed amendment to Article 1 of the New York Constitution would establish the right of each person to clean air and water and a healthful environment . Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

CITIZENS UNION SUPPORTS THIS PROPOSAL

Citizens Union recommends a yes vote on question 2, which would add environmental rights to New York’s Bill of Rights, with the understanding (based on its legislative history and available precedents) courts will construe it as self-executing against the government, but not against private parties, and as not authorizing claims for damages against the government, and with due regard for the role of the legislative and executive branches in developing and implementing environmental policy.

BALLOT PROPOSAL 3, AN AMENDMENT: ELIMINATING TEN-DAY-ADVANCE VOTER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

The proposed amendment would delete the current requirement in Article 2, § 5 that a citizen be registered to vote at least ten days before an election and would allow the Legislature to enact laws permitting a citizen to register to vote less than ten days before the election. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

CITIZENS UNION SUPPORTS THIS PROPOSAL

Citizens Union recommends a yes vote on question 3, which would allow voters to register to vote and cast their ballots less than ten days before an election. This proposal would allow the legislature to enact laws that make it possible to register to vote and cast your ballot on the same day. This streamlines registration and voting into a single process, diminishing administrative burdens associated with registration procedures and affidavit ballots and eliminating confusion and uncertainty over voter registration status. Every

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eligible citizen should have the opportunity to cast their ballot, regardless of when they registered to vote. Eliminating the current unnecessary restriction on voter registration will make it easier to vote and increase turnout in our elections.

BALLOT PROPOSAL 4, AN AMENDMENT: AUTHORIZING NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTING

The proposed amendment would delete from the current provision on absentee ballots the requirement that an absentee voter must be unable to appear at the polls by reason of absence from the county or illness or physical disability. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

CITIZENS UNION SUPPORTS THIS PROPOSAL

Citizens Union recommends a yes vote on question 4, which would eliminate the requirement that absentee voters must be unable to physically cast their ballot for reasons of illness or physical disability. This measure would give alternative voting options to people who have unmovable obligations or irregular schedules. Given that most elections are held during work days, many citizens simply cannot afford to wait for hours in line to vote or incur the costs of traveling to and from the poll site. If this amendment is approved, all New Yorkers could easily cast their votes on their own time from the comfort of their own homes by mailing their ballot. Not only would this proposal increase voter turnout and public participation in our elections, but it would also carry the additional benefit of decreasing the number of challenged and litigated absentee ballots, making the process easier for election administrators. In fact, New York already implemented no-excuse absentee voting in 2020 and 2021, when this restriction was waived under the COVID state of emergency. Voters enthusiastically adopted this new voting method, and the result was dramatic increases in turnout in all elections.



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BALLOT PROPOSAL 5, AN AMENDMENT: INCREASING THE JURISDICTION OF THE NEW YORK CITY CIVIL COURT

The proposed amendment would increase the New York City Civil Court's jurisdiction by allowing it to hear and decide claims for up to \$50,000 instead of the current jurisdictional limit of \$25,000. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

CITIZENS UNION **SUPPORTS** THIS PROPOSAL

Citizens Union recommends a yes vote on question 5, which would increase the jurisdiction of the New York City Civil Court to hear and decide claims for \$50,000 or less. The jurisdictional limit of the New York City Civil Court was last raised in 1983, when a constitutional amendment changed it from \$10,000 to \$25,000 to adjust for inflation and reduce the backlog of the State Supreme Court. It is well past time to raise the 35-year-old threshold. Citizens Union believes this amendment would reduce backlogs and delays, and adjust the current limit for inflation.

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PROCESS

Citizens Union evaluates candidates to determine who strongly supports our issues, can advance a reform agenda, and can best fulfill the obligations of the position. Interview teams made up of Local Candidates Committee members assessed the candidates based on their responses to Citizens Union’s questionnaire (a prerequisite for interviews), research, first-hand knowledge of the candidates, and interviews with the candidates, which are approximately 30 minutes each. The interview teams then made advisory recommendations to the full Local Candidates Committee, which deliberated and made recommendations to the Citizens Union Board, which made the final decision.

An “Endorsed” rating reflects a candidate that Citizens Union deems not only qualified for the office, but also a viable candidate, committed to an agenda of positive reform. Please note that candidates not endorsed may nevertheless be highly regarded, which is generally reflected in the commentary.

Citizens Union issues a “Preferred” rating in primary elections, and an “Endorsed” rating for General Election contests. A “No Preference” rating may result when there is insufficient information available, it is believed that the candidates are of equal merit, or if no candidate interviewed by Citizens Union is believed to be effective or capable of representing the district. A “Dual Preference” designation may be offered to two qualified candidates, but not a “Dual Endorsement.” A “Dual Preference” shall be used only as a last resort, and, in the case of such determination, CU shall explain its reasoning in its Voters Directory.



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OUR CRITERIA

The following guidelines are used by the Local Candidates Committee and Citizens Union Board of Directors in the evaluation of candidates:

- Support for Citizens Union’s reform agenda shall be the primary criteria used in deciding its support for a candidate.
- Evidence of ability to wage an effective and competitive campaign shall be considered, but not be determinative.
- Ability to advance CU’s goals, if elected, shall be considered, but not determinative. Incumbents will be held accountable for their record of reform in office and shall be judged accordingly on the basis of their demonstrated support for CU’s issues.
- State, local, or community issues specific to the race’s jurisdiction shall be considered, as will candidates’ ability to grasp these issues and propose thoughtful solutions to represent their constituents’ interests.
- Evaluation of the candidates and the decision to support a particular candidate shall be made without regard to political party and in a nonpartisan manner.

Candidate Evaluations

All candidates questionnaires can be found online at citizensunion.org.

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CITYWIDE RACES

New York City Mayor

Eric Adams ★ *Endorsed Candidate*

Democratic

Age: 60 Occupation: Brooklyn Borough President

Education: New York City College of Technology (associate degree), John Jay College of Criminal Justice (B.A.), and Marist College (M.P.A.)

Eric Adams is currently Brooklyn's Borough President, a position he has held for the last eight years. He served in the State Senate between 2006 and 2013, representing Central Brooklyn. Citizens Union supported his elections to both of those positions. Prior to becoming an elected official, Adams served for 22 years in the New York Police Department, leaving the force as an officer after he was targeted in a shooting. He has a compelling personal story and is considered by many to be an inspiring leader.

Adams emphasizes public safety and economic recovery as his priorities. He plans to battle what he calls the dysfunctionality of the City, which he sees as "the root of all its problems." He wants to balance the public safety needs of all communities, while assuring that the NYPD becomes a role model for accountability, and believes that as a former police officer of color he can accomplish that ambitious agenda. He promises to make the current discipline process in cases of police misconduct fairer and faster, and to recruit well-skilled, professional investigators. He seeks to move investigations conducted by the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) to an outside body like the Department of Investigations. To improve community-police relations, he wants community members to have a say in the appointment of precinct commanders.

On the economy, Adams promises to eliminate fees and reduce fines for small businesses, to provide direct cash assistance for New Yorkers in need, and invest significantly in green jobs. As Brooklyn Borough President, he has proven track record of advancing



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economic development in his borough, while responding to the needs of communities affected by new development.

Adams has faced questions concerning fundraising and conflicts of interest. While permissible under local law, his fundraising operation at times has subjected him to scrutiny he would do well to avoid going forward. Adams says, while he considers these criticisms unfair, he nevertheless intends to establish a compliance team at City Hall, if elected.

Adams’s inspiring leadership and vision for our City promoting public safety and economic recovery are the reasons Citizens Union endorses him to become the next Mayor of New York City. Citizens Union looks forward to him embracing its good government agenda and turning around our City at a time when we so desperately need his kind of competent, committed and compassionate leadership.

Curtis Sliwa

Republican, Independent

Age: 67 Occupation: Founder, Guardian Angels, Radio host

Education: Canarsie High School

Curtis Sliwa, the well-known radio personality and founder of the Guardian Angels, is the Republican party nominee to be the next New York City Mayor. Sliwa has been a city fixture in his red beret since the 1970s, when he and members of the Angels patrolled the subways unarmed in an effort to combat crime and violence. He hosted several conservative radio talk shows and was a commentator on New York politics on local newspapers and networks. For several years he also chaired the New York State Reform Party. Yet, this is his first bid for office.

Sliwa is running on a law-and-order platform. He wants to restore funding cuts made to the New York Police Department and add thousands of officers to patrol the subway. At the same time, he says he is the “compassionate” candidate in the race, highlighting his support for more supportive housing for the homeless and a no-kill policy in animal shelters.

In his interview, Sliwa expressed support for much of CU’s election reform agenda. That includes using the mayor’s office to press for



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Board of Election reform, expanding Ranked Choice Voting, making it easier for candidates to get on the ballot, and moving to a non-partisan open-primary system. He promised to appoint a Charter Revision Commission, consisting of election reformers across the political spectrum, to tackle those issues, and said he believes city government needs “more oversight, not less oversight.”

The one area Sliwa did not think required more oversight is policing. He believes mayors have been too involved in the Police Department, which he said has more oversight than any other agency. He opposes most police reforms proposed in CU’s candidate questionnaire, including those that would strengthen the Civilian Complaint Review Board and its ability to investigate cases of police misconduct.

While Curtis Sliwa shares many of our views on election reform, his positions on police reform and accountability are not in line with Citizens Union’s values. We appreciate his years of involvement in the city’s civic life and his interest in learning from experts on how to run the city. Yet as we emerge from the pandemic, New York City needs a leader with more experience and a proven track record.

William Pepitone

Conservative

This candidate did not submit a candidate questionnaire.

The following candidates were not interviewed:

Stacey Prussman (Libertarian)

Catherine Rojas (Party for Socialism and Liberation)

Fernando Mateo (Save Our City)

Raja Michael Flores (Humanity United)

Skiboky Stora (Out Lawbreaker)

Quanda S. Francis (Empowerment)

Queens

COUNCIL DISTRICT 19

Auburndale, Bay Terrace, Bayside, Beechhurst, College Point, Douglaston, Flushing, Little Neck, Malba, Whitestone.

Tony Avella ★ Endorsed Candidate

Democratic

Age: 69 Occupation: Former State Senator and City Council Member

Education: Hunter College (B.A.)

Tony Avella served as the Council Member in this northeastern Queens district from 2002 to 2009. He was then elected to the State Senate and served there from 2011 to 2018, when he lost his seat to a primary challenger. He wants to go back to his previous role because the city government and the current Council Member have been absent from this district, he says. On top of his priorities is to divide the massive local police precinct that covers Flushing into two separate precincts. He also wants to cap property taxes for co-ops and condominiums and increase food stamps. In his interview with CU, he has said he plans to focus on improving the Council's oversight capabilities, which he sees as lacking. He opposes several CU-supported police reforms. He is interested in "some mechanism of council involvement" in the appointment of the Police Commissioner, but not requiring advice and consent from lawmakers. He believes the proposal to provide the Civilian Complaint Review Board full access to police material relevant to its investigations needs more research before he would be able to support it.

Avella has been criticized before for his membership in the now-defunct State Senate Independent Democratic Conference and his opposition to some good government reforms, including by this body. However, he has also shown longstanding commitment to reform issues like campaign finance and ethics, and an independent-spirited record. Citizens Union endorses Tony Avella in this race, and hopes he would be a more active collaborator on reform issues in the next City Council

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Vickie Paladino

Republican, Independent

Age: 67 Occupation: Retired, small business owner

Education: High school

Paladino is a retired small-business owner and a local activist, who serves as President of the Whitestone Republican Club. Her top priorities are to refund the New York Police Department, to stop Rikers Island from being closed, and to “ensure criminals face consequences.” She also promised to end all COVID restrictions and protect the district from upzonings that remove single-family homes and bring in homeless shelters. Paladino opposed most reform issues on the CU agenda. She believes Ranked Choice Voting has been “an absolute farce” and wants it to be repealed. She is against all proposals to increase accountability in the Police Department, and says the Civilian Complaint Review Board is composed of “radical activists and partisans of the worst sort.” She spoke about fighting “rampant corruption” but provided little evidence or concrete plans to address it. Citizens Union believes she should not be elected for this position.

John-Alexander Sakelos

Conservative, Save Our City

This candidate did not submit a candidate questionnaire.

Staten Island

COUNCIL DISTRICT 50

Arrochar, Bloomfield, Bulls Head, Castleton Corners, Chelsea, Concord, Dongan Hills, Egbertville, Emerson Hill, Fort Wadsworth, Graniteville, Grant City, Grasmere, Heartland Village, Isle of Meadows, Lighthouse Hill, Manor Heights, Meiers Corners, Midland Beach, New Dorp, New Springville, Oakwood, Ocean Breeze, Old Town, Prall's Island, Richmondtown, Rosebank, Shore Acres, South Beach, Todt Hill, Travis, Westerleigh, and Willowbrook.

Sal Albanese ★ Endorsed Candidate

Democratic, Staten Island 1st

Age: 72 Occupation: Attorney, former City Council Member

Education: York College (B.A.), NYU (M.A.), Brooklyn Law School J.D.

Albanese was a four-term Council Member, representing the Bay Ridge area in Brooklyn from 1983 to 1997. He is an attorney and a financial advisor who has run for mayor four times. Most recently, he served on the 2019 Charter Revision Commission. Albanese was known to be an independent Council Member, voting against the party leadership's positions and pressing for reform issues like public campaign finance, which he helped pass. He promises to continue that work if back in the Council by introducing bills that establish a campaign finance voucher program, non-partisan elections, and other political reform. Albanese supported most of the items in CU's candidate questionnaire except for two, which he had reservations about. He noted he wants to be assured that police officers' due process rights are protected when the Civilian Complaint Review Board gets full access to material from the police, and asked to see more details of the proposal to consolidate the three bodies that exercise oversight over the NYPD. On non reform issues, he says he'll prioritize property tax reform and investments in public transportation, two major issues in Staten Island. Citizens Union appreciates longtime advocacy for reforming the political system, and believes he has the experience and knowledge needed for the job. We endorse him in this race.

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George Wonica

Conservative

Age: 46 Occupation: Real Estate Broker

Education: St. John's University (B.S.)

George Wonica is a real estate broker and appraiser with deep roots in Staten Island. This is his first entrance to local politics, and he says his experience as a businessman will serve him well in negotiations and day-to-day work in the legislative body. He served on the local community board. Wonica's top priority for this position is to make the property tax system more equal, an issue he says he has worked on for years. Wonica opposed all of the questions on the CU candidate questionnaire, except one: he supports making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome reportable as a lobbying expense. His views on police accountability and the current problems in that area were particularly not in line with our agenda. Although he does not support most reform issues, Citizens Union found Wonica to be intelligent and energetic, and was impressed by his thoughtful responses. We encourage him to continue his involvement in the civic arena.

David Carr

Republican

This candidate did not submit a candidate questionnaire.



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Of the 51 seats in the New York City Council, 10 candidates are uncontested in the General Election. Of those, one candidate, Kalman Yeger of the 44th Council District, faced no primary election competition either, meaning that he will serve another term without having been meaningfully chosen by his constituents. 5 candidates are running unopposed to fill an open seat, where there is no incumbent running.

The Brooklyn District Attorney, Eric Gonzales, who is up for reelection this year, will also continue to another term without being contested in the primary or general elections. In addition, there is a seat in the New York State Assembly, filled by special election, in which the Democratic candidate is running unopposed. Because nominees in New York’s special elections are chosen by party leadership, this elected office will be filled without any vote from the constituents it represents.

The following candidates are running uncontested or unopposed in the general election this year:

Brooklyn District Attorney
Eric Gonzalez (D) (Incumbent)

Queens Council District 27
Natasha Williams (D)

Bronx Assembly District 86
Yudelka Tapia (D) (Special
Election)

Queens Council District 30
Robert Holden (D, R, C) (Incumbent)

Manhattan Council District 3
Erik Bottcher (D)

Brooklyn Council District 33
Lincoln Restler (D)

**Bronx and Manhattan Council
District 8**
Diana Ayala (D) (Incumbent)

Brooklyn Council District 36
Chi Osse (D)

Bronx Council District 12
Kevin Riley (D) (Incumbent)

Brooklyn Council District 42
Charles Barron (D)

Queens Council District 21
Francisco Moya (D) (Incumbent)

Brooklyn Council District 44
Kalman Yeger (D, R, C)
(Incumbent)

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This Voters Directory would not be possible without the hard work of members of the Citizens Union Board, Local Candidates Committee (LCC), staff and interns. 30 volunteer LCC members, 3 interns, and staff members formed nonpartisan interview teams to evaluate candidates. 25 volunteer Policy Committee members worked to evaluate the ballot proposals. We thank them for contributing their time, energy, and expertise to interviewing and evaluating candidates, especially during this challenging moment. We thank you for your support, and hope you enjoy the latest edition of the Voters Directory.



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