



Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Kevin S. Parker,

Congratulations on your decision to run for a seat on the New York Legislature! 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.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office, 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 March 16.

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Name

Kevin S. Parker

Office Sought (New York State)

Senate

District Number

21

In which primary

Democratic

What party line/s are you running under?

Democratic

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

Democratic

Age

Education

Besides being an alumnus of the New York City public school system, I hold a BS in Public Service from Penn State, an MS in Urban Policy and Management from the New School, and am a PhD candidate in Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center. I am also a former Mel King Community Fellow at MIT.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Before my Senate career I was Project Manager for the New York State Urban Development Corporation, and a Special Assistant to New York State Comptroller Carl McCall.

Besides my Senate campaigns, I ran for city council in 2001 and Comptroller in 2021.

My community involvement includes membership in the Progressive Democrats Political Association of Central Brooklyn, a Democratic club that promotes civic engagement for Caribbean Americans.

Website

Twitter [KevinParkerNYC](#)

Facebook [KevinParkerNYC](#)

AFFIRMATIONS

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union’s Local Candidates Committee?

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union preferences and endorsements)

Signature



ETHICS

Do you support replacing Joint Commission on Public Ethics with an effective and independent enforcement body, whose members are not appointed directly by elected officials?

Yes

Do you support the new independent ethics oversight agency to also replace the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC)?

Yes

Do you support allowing the new ethics body to investigate misconduct more effectively by simplifying its voting rules, giving it the authority to subpoena testimony and documents, empowering it to suspend or terminate public officials (not elected officials), and increasing its transparency?

Yes

Do you support significantly limiting outside compensation earned by state legislators and eliminate stipends, while increasing their pay?

Yes

Do you hold financial interest or serve as an officer on an entity that receives funding from the state? If you do, how will you manage this conflict of interest?

No

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

No

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Election Administration

How would you use your power as a legislator to improve election administration in New York? Feel free to add any policy proposals you support in regards to reforming the BOE.

We must professionalize the BOE and end its usage as a patronage mill. I would support legislation requiring a competitive hiring process and civil service exam for all staff. BOE careers must offer competitive salaries and benefits in order to attract top talent.

Do you support removing the constitutional requirement in election administration that empowers the two major political parties to nominate and effectively control election boards?

Yes

Do you support reducing the party-based hiring in boards of elections to the minimum currently required by the constitution?

Yes

Do you support implementing an open, competitive, merit-based hiring process for all election administration staff and certain functions at polls?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.

Voting Rights

Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact same-day voter registration, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?

Yes

Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

I support the current process of nominating candidates for special elections. I would disagree with the assertion that County Committee nominations are “effectively controlled by party leaders,” as there are regularly multiple candidates supported by different groups within the party. As we saw recently, my new colleague Cordell Cleare won nomination for State Senate despite Inez Dickens arguably being the most politically influential candidate, so there are no guarantees in the selection process. The subsequent special election also had three candidates from which voters could choose.

I do not support a primary before a special election, because that would leave a district without representation for an extra month.

Open and Competitive Elections

Do you support easing access to the ballot for parties and independent candidates, by returning to the pre-2020 voting and signature thresholds? That includes reducing the voting threshold to become a registered party back to 50,000 votes in a gubernatorial election, and the petition requirement for independent candidates back to 15,000 signatures.

Yes

Do you support reforming the process of filling vacancies in the state legislature by implementing nonpartisan special elections or holding a primary election at least thirty days in advance of the special election?

No

Who do you think should draw new district maps every decade in New York? (e.g., the current Independent Redistricting Commission, the Legislature/LATFOR, a new body)

I believe we need a truly independent redistricting commission, modeled on California's, in which legislators can only recommend commissioners, some commissioners are chosen using a random drawing from a talent pool, and there are several commissioners who are not members of any party.

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CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Do you support further reducing campaign contribution limits?

Yes

Do you support setting even lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state?

Yes

Starting from the next election cycle, New York will have a public campaign finance program, offering matching funds on small donations for candidates who opt in. If you decide to run again in the next election, do you intend to participate in the program?

Yes

Do you support moving the campaign finance matching program to be administered by an independent, nonpartisan body outside of the State Board of Election?

No

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

As a Comptroller candidate last year I participated in the NYCCFB's matching funds program. I believe we should give the State BOE a chance to administer a program before making a new body.

COURT REFORM

Do you support simplifying and consolidating New York State's court system - which includes 11 trial courts - by passing the Chief Judge's proposed constitutional amendment to modernize the courts?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

GOALS, PLANS, AND REPRESENTATION

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: An economic recovery that lifts all boats

Second: Police reform

Third: Combating climate change; To promote an equitable recovery, I will support more legislation to create living wage jobs with benefits through infrastructure investments and other financial incentives tied to creation of jobs with justice. To address both job creation and climate change, I introduced the Climate and Community Investment Act and Build Public Renewables Act, which would create 200,000 jobs that would require PLAs and management neutrality in any unionization drive, while bringing us to a clean energy future. For police reform, I have passed numerous bills as State Senator, including the first package of police reform legislation passed in any statehouse after the death of George Floyd. Going forward I will continue passing bills to end police misconduct.

If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce? If you are an incumbent, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to pass?

The CCIA, to accelerate our transition to renewables.

In providing constituent service, what are the major needs of your district's constituents and how will you meet them?

Jobs and the cost of housing are the two most common issues my constituents raise. To remedy the former, I have my multiple green infrastructure bills, to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. To address both housing and jobs, I support a NYCHA New Deal to jumpstart renovations in the authority while creating thousands of building trades jobs. For housing, I also support creation of workforce housing, an underutilized housing policy for people whose income is too high to qualify for housing assistance but still have trouble affording rent. Additionally, I helped pass the eviction moratorium.

What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, government transparency and oversight, police accountability). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I was a member of the Temporary Committee on Rules and Administration Reform

that, with input from Citizens Union, created rules to make Senate procedures more democratic and transparent. Today I am a member of the Rules Committee.

How long have you lived in the district in which you are running?

46 years

Have you lived in the district before this year's redistricting?

Yes

For incumbents: If your district has changed significantly following this year's redistricting, how do you intend to run your office to serve the needs of the new constituents you now represent?

The major change for my district is that I will have fewer constituents, in order to compensate for past Republican gerrymandering that put too many people in New York City's Senate districts. I look forward to a cozier district that will allow me to devote more attention to each of my constituents.

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race), and what is your plan to achieve that number?

I expect to need around 25,000 votes in the primary and 100,000 in the general. I will pound the pavement and reach out to every voter, and seek support from progressive organizations whose values match my own.

What are your current fundraising numbers, if different than the last campaign finance filing?

About \$300,000 and growing.

How many individual donors do you have?

About 500

Please indicate any endorsements that your campaign has received, if applicable (you can also share a link to a list of endorsements)

None yet

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.

 KP Palm Card 4x9.pdf	 KP Senate Half Page Mailer_March2022.pdf
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What else would you like us to know about yourself?

With the support of my community and advocates from across the state, I am humbled to have passed over 90 laws, making me one of the most prolific legislators in Albany history.

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 a PDF file containing 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

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