



# Candidate Evaluation Info Sheet Local Candidates Committee

## OUR VALUES AND AIMS

Citizens Union (CU) is a nonpartisan democratic reform and good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. For over 125 years, Citizens Union has served as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. We work to ensure fair and open elections, honest and efficient government, and a civically engaged public.

In keeping with our mission, CU aims to promote a competitive and diverse political culture, a fair and open political process, and accountable and responsible governance. To that end, CU evaluates candidates for elected office and backs those who strongly support and can advance our agenda for reform.

In a transparent process conducted by CU members, candidates are assessed through a questionnaire, independent research, and interviews. Beginning in 1910 and continuing today, CU has published a Voters Directory before every primary and every general election, with a nonpartisan evaluation of the candidates.

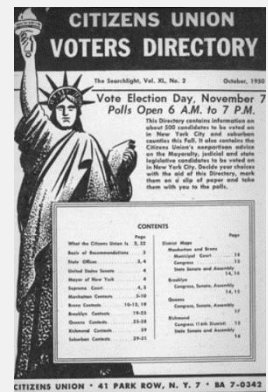
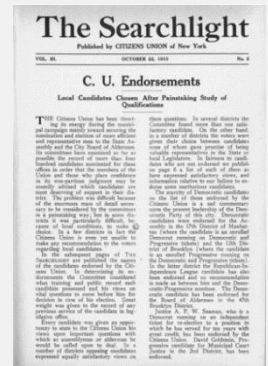
## THE REFORM AGENDA

Candidates are evaluated based on their support for Citizens Union’s reform agenda and their ability to advance these goals. They are asked about their positions on policies relating to:

- Elections and voting:** Making it easier to vote and to run, fixing election administration, creating a political system that is more fair and competitive, increasing voter participation.
- Campaign finance:** Reducing the role of money in politics and strengthening the public financing of campaigns.
- Ethics:** Rooting out corruption, creating independent watchdogs, improving lobbying oversight, fighting “pay-to-play” culture.
- Police accountability:** Assuring oversight and accountability of the NYPD, improving the effectiveness of policing in the City’s various communities.

And a *broad range of areas* to ensure that New Yorkers have a system of government that is representative and responsive to their needs. You can read more about Citizens Union’s work, research, and advocacy [on our website](#).

Questions? Email [candidates@citizensunion.org](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)



## OUR CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CANDIDATES

**Support for Citizens Union’s reform agenda is the primary criterion used in deciding our support for a candidate.**

Other criteria considered in evaluating candidates and campaigns:

- A record of ethical integrity
- Commitment and ability to advance CU’s goals, if elected
- For incumbents: demonstrated support for CU’s issues while in office
- Evidence of ability to wage an effective and competitive campaign
- Reliance on small-donor, local financing of the campaign
- Candidates’ grasp of issues specific to the race’s jurisdiction, and whether they propose thoughtful solutions to represent 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.

## OUR PROCEDURES FOR CANDIDATE EVALUATION

- **Races:** CU prioritizes evaluating races that are most competitive and relevant to our reform agenda. Due to limited resources, not all races are evaluated, and CU reserves the right to evaluate races at the organization’s discretion.
- **Requirements:** Candidates must submit their questionnaire before their interview and must be interviewed to be considered for a preference or endorsement. Questionnaires can be found [on our website](#).
- **Interviews:** Candidates are interviewed for approximately thirty minutes by members of the CU Local Candidates Committee (LCC). Generally, at least three LCC members and a CU staff member will be present during the interview. One campaign staff person may be present but may not participate.
- **CU decision:** Interview teams present recommendations for preferences and endorsements to the full Local Candidates Committee, which then votes upon and submits the results to the CU Board for final deliberation and approval.

## OUR LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES

- CU issues a “preference” to express support in a party primary election and an “endorsement” to express support in a general election.
- CU issues a “No Preference” or “No Endorsement” in races that do not provide a clear-cut example of one candidate more closely aligned with CU’s agenda.
- CU might issue a “Dual Preference” designation to two qualified candidates, but only as a last resort. CU will explain its reasoning in its Voters Directory. CU does not issue a “Dual Endorsement” in the general election.
- CU will inform its members and voters about its support for candidates through traditional media, digital outlets, and its Voters Directory.
- Some candidates may receive Citizens Union’s preference in a party primary election but not an endorsement in the general election. These candidates are allowed to campaign with CU’s primary preference, but if they have not been endorsed in the general election, they *may not* use any of CU’s logos or images during the general election campaign.

