



2026 General Candidate Questionnaire Attorney General of New York

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

THIS IS A BLANK QUESTIONNAIRE – YOU CAN SEND IT WITH YOUR RESPONSES TO CANDIDATES@CITIZENSUNION.ORG OR SUBMIT IT ONLINE HERE

Congratulations on your decision to run for Attorney General of New York! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serving the public.

For over 125 years, Citizens Union (CU) has been devoted to holding our local government accountable with the highest ethical standards and fighting for political reforms that improve New York democracy (<https://citizensunion.org/issues/>). To promote a competitive and diverse political culture, a fair and open political process, and accountable and responsible government, we evaluate candidates running for office and back those who strongly support reform. Our evaluations are done through questionnaires, independent research, and interviews conducted by our Local Candidates Committee.

(<https://citizensunion.org/citizens-union-evaluation-process/>).

As a prerequisite for receiving the support of Citizens Union, please complete the following questionnaire as soon as possible. As you complete the form, you can click “Save” and return to the form later. All short answers have a 250-word limit. Once you have completed the questionnaire and submitted your response to us, you will receive a copy of your submission. Your submission will be posted on our website (with the exception of contact info).

Upon receipt of your submission, we will reach out to you or your staff to schedule a virtual interview with members of our Local Candidate Committee. **Please note that the interview will be recorded and excerpts may be posted on our website and social media platforms.** Shortly thereafter, we will announce our support in key priority races to our members and on our website and other channels. 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.

Please feel free to reach out to Citizens Union with any questions or comments at candidates@citizensunion.org.

Thank you very much. We look forward to your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Name	Letitia A. James
District	Attorney General of New York
Party	Democrat
Age	67
Education	High School: Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn, NY Undergraduate Degree: Bachelor of Arts from Lehman College Law Degree: Juris Doctor from Howard University School of Law Graduate Degree:
Current job, position, or occupation	Attorney General
Other current appointed or elected positions	N/A
Previous jobs or appointed/elected positions	NYC Public Advocate; NYC Councilmember
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Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/LetitiaJamesforNY/
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Bluesky	https://bsky.app/profile/newyorkstateag.bsky.social
Other social media platforms	N/A

General

1. What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what actions will you take to achieve them if elected?

Safety, affordability, and justice. My job is to utilize the Office of the Attorney General as a sword and a shield to protect New Yorkers. When it comes to safety, we have taken more than 10,000 guns off our streets during my time as Attorney General, and have worked to dismantle gun and drug trafficking rings, and the pipelines that bring illegal guns to our communities. I will keep going after these traffickers and pipelines that have harmed too many New Yorkers for too long. My office has also taken a broader view of what safety means, including a recently-announced landmark settlement with Meta, a \$17 billion settlement with over \$1 billion coming to New York to ensure that young people are protected from dangerous social media algorithms and practices. I pledge to continue taking on the forces that cause harm to New Yorkers, regardless of its form.

On affordability, my office worked tirelessly to help pass the One Fair Price Act, which prohibits companies from charging customers an individual price based on their personal data, also known as surveillance pricing. Our office has also successfully sued dozens of unscrupulous businesses that took advantage of customers, including car dealers, student loan servicers, and other companies that were short changing New Yorkers. I will continue to go after predatory lenders, collectors, and junk or hidden fees.

Lastly, I will continue to deliver justice as the people's lawyer. I will continue to work to stop the scourge of deed theft, hold bad landlords accountable, recover stolen wages, and defend New Yorkers and all Americans whenever there's overreach from the federal government.

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

When the federal government worked to restrict mail-in voting ahead of this November's election, my office joined a coalition of states in suing to block a new rule that would have disenfranchised voters across the country. This month, the Supreme Court refused to let those restrictions take effect for the midterms. The Office of the Attorney General has always protected the right to vote and we will act whenever that right is under attack.

I have been a leader in the fight for public financing since I first took office as an insurgent candidate. As Public Advocate, I joined 200,000 other New Yorkers in urging a former governor to keep public financing in the state budget. I and many others would not be where we are today without public financing.

Under my leadership, the Office of the Attorney General also took on the same sitting governor from my own party. We held his administration accountable for undercounting COVID-19 deaths

among nursing home residents, and we investigated and reported on findings that he sexually harassed multiple women.

With regard to police accountability, my office's Office of Special Investigation (OSI) investigates every death of a civilian caused by a police officer, whether the officer is on or off duty and whether the person was armed or unarmed. My office also houses the Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office (LEMIO), which investigates and reports on misconduct by law enforcement agencies across the state. And we sued the NYPD over its handling of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, winning a settlement that reformed how the NYPD responds to protests and, among other things, ended the practice of kettling protesters without probable cause.

3. How do you intend to recruit or attract high-quality lawyers to work in the attorney general's office?

The Office of the Attorney General takes on the largest companies and some of the most consequential constitutional and public-interest law litigation in the country. Our fellowships and internships bring in top new lawyers each year and we actively recruit from communities underrepresented in the profession. I will continue to build a staff that not only looks like New York, but will work day in and out to fight for the people of our great state. I will also push for pay and the support needed to keep talented staff and attorneys afford to stay in public service.

4. New York has had a history of working cooperatively with attorneys general from other states engaging in multistate investigations and multistate lawsuits. What is your view of that?

Some of our biggest wins have often come from multi-state, bipartisan coalitions. I co-led a bipartisan group of 53 attorneys general that secured \$700 million from Google for illegally monopolizing Android app sales and overcharging customers, with \$630 million going back into consumer's pockets. I also worked with a bipartisan group of attorneys general who secured \$720 million from eight opioid companies, bringing New York's total recoveries from opioid settlements to over \$3 billion. Most recently, this past summer of 2026, I and 50 other attorneys general reached a settlement with Meta worth up to \$17.1 billion with up to over \$1 billion coming to New York to protect children and families from some of the harms of social media use.

Ethics & Corruption

5. What are your thoughts on striking the appropriate balance between the Attorney General's role as the lawyer representing the state and its officials, and as an independently elected government official?

As Attorney General, I serve the public interest and enforce the law to protect all New Yorkers — not any official's personal interests. When former Governor Andrew Cuomo was accused of sexual misconduct, I stood with the legislature to ensure my office selected individuals to conduct a rigorous and independent investigation with subpoena power. Our investigation was thorough, and worked with outside and impartial experts to deliver a report that was based on facts and evidence. My office later declined to provide the former governor's personal defense in a related lawsuit.

I have and will continue to defend New York's laws, from the Voting Rights Act to our gun safety laws. If representing an elected official would compromise the Office of the Attorney General's independence, I will not do it.

- 6. Citizens Union believes that all New Yorkers deserve to be represented by officials who work for the public interest and honor the public trust. We seek to endorse a candidate who will demonstrate that she/he will honor the full commitment of the oath of office and always represent the public interest above all else. Please tell us how you will conduct (and for incumbents, have conducted) the duties of this office, recognizing the political aspect of running for office, so as to maintain the public trust.**

My record speaks for itself. My office has investigated elected officials on both sides of the aisle, because this office belongs to the people of New York, not to me or a political party. In tandem with the New York State Comptroller, my office secured a guilty plea and resignation of the Democratic mayor of Mount Vernon for campaign finance misuse. When elected officials use power to line their own pockets or benefit themselves, they violate public trust. New Yorkers put faith into their public servants, and I will do everything in my power to root out public corruption and uphold the integrity of public office at all levels of government.

Where public concern arises, my office acts. We work to address issues that impact New Yorkers every day, while also pursuing systemic change upstream. When algorithms preyed on our children and negatively impacted their mental health, I pursued legislation and litigation to hold Big Tech accountable, resulting in a landmark \$1 billion plus settlement intended to support mental health services, education programs, and other efforts to repair and reduce the harm caused by unhealthy social media use among our kids. When gun violence threatened our neighbors, I helped take guns off the streets by dismantling trafficking rings smuggling illegal firearms through the Iron Pipeline into New York, and held gun manufacturers who helped criminals harm New Yorkers accountable.

When public concerns arise, my office takes action to hold the powerful to account and protect New Yorkers, no matter what.

- 7. How would you address fraud and public misconduct of elected officials? Do you believe that greater responsibility should be given to the office to investigate**

corruption and how would you achieve that? Are there statutory changes you recommend that would expand the Attorney General's role?

Today the Attorney General cannot independently prosecute public corruption without a referral from the Governor or another agency, and that gap matters. I pledged in 2018 to seek permanent authority to prosecute public corruption, I pressed for it in 2019, and it remains a priority for my office. New York should give the office concurrent jurisdiction over corruption by state and local officials, with appropriate safeguards and full transparency about how cases are opened. Until then, we use every referral we get. Our partnership with the Comptroller has produced convictions of officials who stole from the public. New Yorkers should not have to depend on an official's own agency to police that official's misconduct.

Elections & Campaign Finance

8. Given the federal government's proposed involvement in the state administration of federal elections, what would you do to ensure that federal elections in New York State are free and fair and have trusted outcomes?

My office has been in court at every step since the second Trump administration began to protect New Yorkers' right to vote, and we have and will continue to work with the legislature to champion election reform. I led 19 states in 2025 suing the federal government when it mandated voters use citizenship documents when registering to vote, resulting in a federal court permanently blocking the executive order. This year, when the administration and USPS attempted to strip away the right to vote by mail, I led a coalition of 22 other attorneys general and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro to block the executive order, and we won.

I will protect New Yorkers' right to vote, no matter who tries to strip them of that right.

9. **What do you think the role of Attorney General should be in enforcing election and campaign finance laws? Would you publicly ask the governor to empower you with greater authority to oversee public corruption and enforce related laws, particularly in those areas?**

The OAG is the primary office to protect voting rights in New York. My office promotes and protects the rights of all eligible New Yorkers to vote by investigating and addressing voting rights violations, and ensures all elections are run fairly and free from discrimination. In helping pass and implement the New York Voting Rights Act, my office has had a front-row seat to halting discrimination and disenfranchisement and protecting the sacred right to vote.

We consistently work with boards of elections across the state to ensure they are operating within the law and that voters' rights are not infringed.

We have an election protection hotline to troubleshoot issues and work with local boards of election when necessary during early voting and on Election Day. We also inform voters of AI-generated election misinformation tactics to ensure voters are equipped to vote based on verifiable information and can spot misinformation as it disseminates.

I have asked for greater authority to address public corruption and it remains a priority for my office. Campaign finance violations and public corruption often overlap, and I will continue to work to keep ethics at the forefront of our democratic processes.

10. Do you support measures to limit the role of money in elections and politics, such as substantially reducing contribution limits and/or requiring Independent Expenditure entities (Super PACs) to disclose their top three donors on ads?

Yes, I support measures to require Super PACs to disclose more information on donors. Voters deserve to know who is behind the ads and other campaign materials they see. On contribution limits, I have spent most of my career as a public servant to shrink the influence of big money in politics. I supported closing the LLC loophole, and continue to support overturning Citizens United and a strong public finance system that empowers small dollar donors.

11. Are you a public campaign finance participant? If not, please explain why.

Yes, I am a participant in New York's public campaign finance system. I have championed public campaign finance since I served in the City Council, when I ran as an outside candidate on the Working Families Party line and did not have the backing of a major party.

12. Do you believe there is a conflict of interest in raising funds from companies you may regulate and have to take action against? Are there parameters you set or you believe should be established in statute to limit potential conflicts of interest?

My campaign manages these risks diligently. The campaign reviews contributions for any connections to matters to the Office of the Attorney General's work, and money is returned where there is any potential conflict. No contributor to my campaign receives preferential treatment, and my office's record shows it.

13. Do you accept contributions from individuals or their spouses who work for you?

My office prohibits donations from OAG employees to my campaign, and campaign activity is conducted separately from the OAG, in compliance with state law.

Legislative Priorities

14. What, if any, would be your top legislative priorities to pursue should you be elected to the Office of Attorney General? What specific solutions would you put forward?

Going forward, my office will continue working with our partners in the Legislature and the Governor's office to bring our priority legislation passed this session across the finish line. These bills include the One Fair Price Act (S.8623B/A.9349B), Kids Chatbot Safety Act (S.9051B/A.10379) and the New York Health Information Privacy Act (S.9269/A.10357).

Additionally, in the next legislative session, we plan to work with the New York State Legislature to advance legislation that further protects our elections, strengthens AI safeguards, and shields homeowners and tenants from deed theft and landlord abuse.

15. What, if any, are the key social issues of the state that you would address should you be elected to the Office of Attorney General? How would you address them?

I strongly believe that women have a right to choose what to do with their own bodies. In recent years, because of the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, other states have attempted to encroach on the reproductive rights of New Yorkers. As such, it is my belief that the state's Shield Law now matters more than its authors and advocates anticipated. My office has worked directly with legislators and advocates to draft amendments to strengthen legal protections for patients and providers in New York, and we've intervened where New Yorkers' rights are challenged by out-of-state entities. We've done this by leveraging the powers given to my office by the legislature in the state's Shield Law package.

I also believe that social media and screen time are having a deeply negative impact on our youth. For this reason, my office sued social media companies like Meta and TikTok. My office also worked with our partners in government and labor to pass the New York SAFE for Kids Act, which regulates addictive social media algorithms. Under my leadership, we will continue to enforce this law as written.

16. Do you support opening New York City's closed primary system by holding an election for all candidates followed by a run-off among the top three candidates, allowing over 1 million unaffiliated voters who are currently locked out of the election to participate in the primary election?

I strongly believe that the current closed primary system is a direct way for parties to leverage democracy to settle ideological differences on important policy issues. For this reason, I do not believe that we should do away with partisan primaries.

17. Do you oppose [S10637A](#), which dangerously embraces gerrymandering for state legislative offices as a permanent fix to redistricting?

As a matter of principle, I am deeply opposed to partisan gerrymandering. I support the idea of a truly independent redistricting commission and I don't believe that the legislature should have the last word in determining how districts are drawn. However, I recognize that we are in extraordinary circumstances created by forces outside of our state, including hyper-partisan Republican governors and Washington politicians. They initiated this wave of partisan gerrymandering, not Democrats, and we must not let these national waves jeopardize New Yorkers' freedoms and representation. With that context in mind, I understand the legislature's interest in putting this issue before the voters to let them decide if they believe that New York should change its standard process under the current exigent circumstances.

Additional Information

18. What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I started my career as a public defender at the Legal Aid Society and later ran the Office of the Attorney General's Brooklyn regional office. I then represented Brooklyn's 35th district on the City Council for ten years, then serving as Public Advocate. In 2019, I became the first woman of color to hold statewide office in New York, and the first woman elected as New York Attorney General.

This job has never been about me. It's about what I could do to protect New Yorkers. I ask New Yorkers to vote for me for another term to finish the job.