



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Kayla Santosuosso
City Council District #	47
In which primary	Democrat
Age	35
Education	New York Law School
Current job, position, or occupation	Chief Counsel for Council Member Justin Brannan

Other positions or offices

I have never held elected office before.

Previous jobs or positions

Assistant Corporation Counsel, New York City Law Department

Deputy Chief of Staff, Council Member Justin Brannan

Campaign contact information

Website	kaylaforcouncil.com
Instagram	@kaylaforcouncil2025

INTRODUCTION

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

Promise 1: Cut down on reckless driving and drag racing by redesigning streets and instituting traffic calming measures

Promise 2: Improve infrastructure in the public parks in our district, especially bathrooms.

Promise 3: Work with the incoming Council to pass and fund a universal childcare program.

2. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce? Why is that your top priority? If you are an incumbent, please also state what legislation you have passed which you are most proud of.

Cost of living is forcing working families out of my district, and one of their most pressing costs is childcare. My immediate legislative priority if elected will be to pass and fund a universal child care program.

3. In your view, what are the major needs of your district's constituents?

The needs of my district reflect its diversity. My district is home to one of the largest Arab American populations in the world, and we need greater investment in social services that are tailored to their needs. My district is home to some of the city's largest NYCHA developments, and we need to strengthen residents' ability to decide the best solutions to the many problems their buildings are facing. And everyone in southern Brooklyn needs cleaner streets, safer parks, and protection from reckless driving.

4. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running, and do you have any achievements or involvement in your neighborhood you are particularly proud of?

I moved to Bay Ridge 12 years ago to take a job as Deputy Director at the Arab American Association of New York, a social service and advocacy agency serving the Arab and Muslim communities in my district. In my three years there, I tripled the operating budget, qualified for our first major state and city contracts, achieved Board of Immigration Appeals accreditation and formalized our immigration services programming, and started the first mental health program in the organization.

After that, I managed a campaign for Khader El-Yateem, a Palestinian Lutheran pastor who ran for City Council in 2017. Though he lost to now-Council Member Justin Brannan, we ran a historic campaign, registered hundreds of new voters, and engaged the Arab community (one of the largest in the country) on a new level.

I then served as a Council staffer to CM Brannan, where I solved hundreds of constituent issues, and helped pass legislation protecting workers. I'm most proud of helping to pass legislation for salary transparency in NYC, aiming to close the race and gender wage gap.

Finally, along the line, I also owned and ran a bar in the neighborhood for six years with my husband, a Bay Ridge native.

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

As a Law Department attorney, I protected hundreds of thousands of dollars from fraud and abuse, and helped identify ongoing issues within city agencies that exposed the city to liability.

Recently, my campaign helped to uncover fraud that was perpetuated in the Republican primary for this City Council seat. We helped to expose the fraud, and referred the matter to the Brooklyn DA's office and Attorney General's office. I believe that trust in government services is one of the most critical aspects of a functioning Democracy, and that is increasingly under threat.

6. What do you think the role of the City Council is in city government this upcoming term?

In order to protect New Yorkers from the chaos in the economy and the federal government, we need to elect Councilmembers who know how to run an office effectively. Connecting New Yorkers to the proper city programs is difficult, and with the landscape of services shifting so rapidly, now is not the time for on the job training. Together, my hope is that the incoming Council will govern with a bold vision, but individually, it is critical that each of us work to offer the highest quality service we can.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

7. Do you support moving New York City's elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you co-sponsor a Council Resolution supporting that measure?

Yes

Voter turnout in New York City elections is exceptionally low, as they are held "off-cycle" in odd-numbered years. To boost local voter turnout and reduce participation gaps, the Legislature passed and Governor Hochul signed a law that moves county and town elections to even-numbered years, and lawmakers are supporting a constitutional amendment that would do the same for city elections, including New York City's. Citizens Union is [leading a coalition of groups advocating](#) to move New York City's elections to even-numbered years, and the City Council is considering a [Resolution in support](#) of that shift.

8. The New York City Board of Elections (NYC BOE) has been a source of frustration for voters and candidates for years. The City Council appoints NYC BOE members and has the power to appoint commissioners who are committed to reform, but the most recent commissioners have been appointed behind closed doors. Do you commit to request a public hearing for BOE nominees, and to only vote for individuals who are publicly committed to reducing party-based patronage and supporting open hiring practices?

Yes

9. Do you support maintaining the use of Ranked Choice Voting in New York City's elections?

Yes

10. New York City is one of the few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the primary election. Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of completely open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in one primary where the top two candidates, regardless of party, move on to the general election?

Yes

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or**

plan to take to improve elections and voting in New York City.

There were very credible accusations of voter fraud within the Republican primary for CD47, with a number of dead people casting absentee ballots. If elected my immediate priority will be supporting the ongoing investigation by the Brooklyn DA's office. No matter the party, our votes are sacred. We will root out criminal actors within the BOE, and we will root any dishonesty within our local elections.

Additionally, this fraud was perpetuated via a manipulation of absentee ballots. The state passed a well-intentioned law to protect the privacy of absentee voters, which required the removal of the ballot from the envelope bearing identifying information, and the total separation of envelope and ballot during the counting process. While perhaps a step in the right direction for privacy, this unfortunately led to the BOE having no choice but to certify an election including fraudulent ballots, because they could not identify which ballots belonged to which voter, retroactively. This is state law, so I would work with my colleagues to come up with a solution that protects privacy but also allows for the removal of ballots deemed to be fraudulent.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

11. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by “bundling” donations from other people. Do you support limiting bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?

Yes

12. Are you a supporter of the City’s public campaign matching funds program, and do you commit to protecting the independence of the program and ensuring that the Campaign Finance Board has sufficient resources to run the program?

Yes

ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

13. The recent pattern of indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall has exposed serious ethical problems in City Government. Please describe how you will maintain the highest ethical standards in office.

Lack of faith in our government is doing untold damage to our Democracy, and the voter fraud that happened in my district is a perfect example. I fully support efforts to fight corruption in every level of government, and a high priority if elected will be to root out criminal actors within the Board of Elections to ensure election integrity.

14. Incoming public servants must sever ties and divest from companies or other interests that have business dealings with the City, but they are not required to recuse themselves when working on matters involving their former business partners, clients, employer, etc. Do you support forbidding public servants to work on matters relating to their former business partners, clients, employers, and other interests for a set period of time?

Yes

15. Some campaign consultants also work as lobbyists. Do you support restricting campaign consultants from lobbying the candidates they served for two years after the candidate won elected office?

Yes

16. Do you support moving lobbying oversight and enforcement from the City Clerk's Office to another agency charged with ethics issues, like the Conflicts of Interest Board?

Yes

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

17. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? (i.e., Place the final decision with the Police Commissioner; the Civilian Complaint Review Board; the Mayor; the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety; or another individual or entity).

It is an imperative that people can trust the police, and unfortunately, all too often internal procedures within the NYPD are not sufficient to root out bad actors. The final decision must lie with the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

18. The Mayor currently has the power to block charter revision ballot questions (proposed by the City Council, other charter commissions, and citizen petitions) by establishing their own Charter Revision Commission. Do you support removing this Mayoral power?

Yes

19. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and be put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?

Yes

20. Please provide your views about the New York City Council's "advice and consent" powers. In what cases, if any, should a mayor need the Council's approval for an appointment of a high

ranking Mayoral official, such as an agency commissioner?

I believe in a broad use of advice and consent for high ranking Mayoral officials. This administration has unfortunately exposed the very real threat of Mayors using appointment powers to enrich their network and pad pockets. We need as much of a backstop against that as possible. I supported the expansion of advice and consent in 2024 and would support further expansion. The Council is a co-equal branch of government with the Mayor and must act as such.

ADDITIONAL INFO