

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Eon Tyrell Huntley,

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](#).

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Eon Tyrell Huntley

Office Sought (New York State)

Assembly

District Number

56

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

39

Education

Product of New York City public schools, graduate of Parsons School of Design

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

For 3 years, from 2020 until the start of this 2023 school year, I was PTA president of my children's school.

Before my shop shut down, I was a member of Workers United Local 340, and was a bargaining committee rep for our final contract.

Website <https://eonforassembly.com/>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/eonforassembly>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/eonforassembly>

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

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)?

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?

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

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?

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.

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.

Upholding and advancing the integrity of elections is crucial to ensuring that all New Yorkers have a meaningful voice and say in what happens in their communities. We need to pass the fair redistricting and voting rights ballot propositions that, subject to misinformation campaigns from Republicans, failed to receive majority support from voters in the 2021 elections. Former Governor Cuomo's party qualification changes also made it significantly more difficult for minor parties to qualify to remain on the ballot, thereby undermining the right of New Yorkers to vote for the candidate of their choice on the party line of their choice. In 2021, we saw widespread attempts, many of them successful, by bad faith conservative activists to raid the WFP ballot line. Righting these wrongs needs to be a major priority.

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

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

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?

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

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.

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?

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)

My general position is that maps should be drawn by an independent body to reduce partisan influence. I am not sure if the current Independent Redistricting Commission is fully nonpartisan but it's a step in the right direction.

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.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Do you support further reducing campaign contribution limits?

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?

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.

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: Housing is my first legislative priority because it is a human right; all people deserve to live in safe, dignified, and consistent housing. District 56 is 77% renters and the ever increasing cost of rent has driven 22,000 Black residents out of my neighborhood in the last decade alone. Our current elected officials are accountable to real estate lobbyists and developers, and have stalled protections against price gouging and unjust eviction. We need to elect representatives, like myself, who refuse to take money from the real estate lobby and will work for tenants, the working class, and families. In New York, passing Good Cause Eviction is a critical step—we have to protect New Yorkers from unreasonable rent hikes and evictions so people can stay in their homes and not get priced out of the neighborhoods where they put down roots. Beyond Good Cause, we deserve safe and high-quality public housing. This includes increasing our investment in NYCHA and creating the New York State Social Housing Development Authority (SHDA) which was recently introduced to the assembly by Emily Gallagher. The SHDA would be a first of its kind, well-capitalized public authority charged with constructing new, permanently affordable, mixed-income housing and acquiring and rehabilitating existing housing to maintain permanent affordability. NYS SHDA would have broad authority to build, acquire, and renovate housing that will be permanently affordability and democratically controlled. Landlords could end housing insecurity today. Instead, under a practice called ‘ware-housing’ they are keeping 60,000 rent-controlled apartments vacant while they await the Court decision on the legality of rent control. Returning these apartments to the market would fill a massive gap in New York’s manufactured housing shortage. The passage of a vacancy tax would have the double effect of making this practice inhospitable to the real estate lobby while also providing millions of tax dollars with which to fund the construction of public housing. In addition to passing legislation, I would use my office to support tenant organizing in the district. Connecting tenants with constituent complaints to long term tenant organizing would help bring long term tenant power to the district. I will work with partners in the district, like Senator Brisport, Brooklyn Eviction Defense Tenant Union and the Crown Heights Tenants Union, to identify and address local needs, while forming relationships with upstate legislators and statewide groups, like Housing Justice for All, to understand the housing crisis upstate and fight for statewide solutions. I also commit to working with other tenant champions in the legislature to organize for a strong and comprehensive housing package that stops rent hikes, funds rental assistance and creates social housing.

Second: Education is of immense personal importance to myself and my family. I’m a product of New York City public schools, my daughters attend NYC public schools, and my wife was a public school teacher for 18 years. I was president of my daughters’ school’s PTA and I have seen first hand the results of decades of political willingness to underfund our schools. We need more funding for all levels of public education—primary, secondary, CUNY/SUNY, union apprenticeship programs, and early childcare. It makes no sense that public childcare arbitrarily begins at 4—what are parents and children supposed to do before that? Additionally, we need to provide more funding for CRSE (Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education). We need to do away with the discriminatory practice screening, tracking, and the high stakes testing of our students. Studies have shown what is observable in New York City schools, that these tactics have exacerbated inequity in what is already one of the most segregated school systems in the country. We also must stop the expansion of charter schools, make sure we invest in education as a public good for all students, and ensure fair pay, benefits, and working conditions for teachers and school staff.. The New York State legislature must fully fund public education, must adequately fund our public colleges and universities, which have long provided a path to the middle class for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, must adequately fund our adult education system, and must make childcare universal and free.

Third: New York is one of the wealthiest states in the country, yet we lack funding for vital needs like healthcare and childcare as well as other public goods. With our wealth we should be striving to model the possibilities of what government can be through providing free high quality healthcare to all New Yorkers. We can do that through higher upper-bracket income taxes, wealth taxes, and reforms to corporate taxation, among other measures. The pandemic highlighted how interconnected everyone’s health is. Not only is healthcare an individual right, it is a social one that is fundamental to creating a productive and liveable society. I know the majority of the legislature has already signed onto NYHA, and that leadership has refused to actually bring it to a vote, likely

to protect “supporters” who are not actually willing to pay for the bill. Therefore, I am committed to not only pushing for a vote, but to fighting to raise taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers so we can fund the legislation, which would save most New Yorkers money by eliminating wasteful bureaucracy and insurance industry profits, and take away the terrible reality that most working people are only one health emergency away from financial disaster. I also have a significant personal stake in passing NYHA. For over a decade, my wife's teacher's health insurance provided reliable coverage for my children. Since she underwent a career change we have been left in an uninsured limbo. It is absolutely absurd and immoral that our government is simply okay with my kids potentially going without healthcare. I am lucky to have the time and financial resources to navigate the system and get my daughters covered, but many do not have that privilege. I know the stakes of this fight and am committed to demanding healthcare for all.

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

My first priority is passing laws that help renters stay in their homes and provide stability and empowerment to our neighborhoods. It is wildly unjust that a person's landlord can refuse to renew their lease for no reason, and that landlords can hike rents arbitrarily.

When elected I will be a champion of the New York Health Act. When the NYHA was first proposed in 1992 it was already a direly needed bill. In the preceding 30 years healthcare in New York has dramatically increased in cost while quality of care has decreased, and Black maternal mortality rates has become a crisis; New Yorkers need the NYHA now more than ever. . Every New Yorker suffers from the increasingly profit-driven nature of our healthcare system, and I strongly oppose profit incentives in healthcare (including in supposedly non-profit hospital systems that sometimes act like for-profit corporations). I support taking the profit motive out of healthcare entirely by enacting single-payer healthcare. I believe that healthcare is a human right and that everyone should have access to high quality, equitable medical care without having to incur crippling debt.

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.

There's a class struggle that I know first hand. I am a middle class, hourly worker. I am a Black man raising two daughters in public school. In my life I have experienced and still experience the issues that Citizen Union seeks to address. I believe in order to truly have a government that responds to the needs of the people we need to elect people who will fight with the passion of someone who has experienced struggle and is ready to fight in solidarity with all the working class. Our current Assembly representation does not fight with that passion and it shows—she does not support the renter protections we need to keep our community whole and takes money from charter schools that siphon money away from our neighborhood schools. I am ready to truly stand up and fight for what my community needs.

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

I have lived in Bed-Stuy since 2009. I am a lifelong resident of Brooklyn, born in 1984

to a Brooklyn native mother. I have lived all over Brooklyn—my earliest years living with my grandmother and single mother in the Pink Houses, a NYCHA housing development in East NY, Brooklyn. We would later move to an apartment complex in another part of East NY. As a young adult, I moved out to Bushwick and then to Bed-Stuy in 2009.

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

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?

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?

Win Number: 7,801

Coalition Building

This race has the potential to build a broad coalition of support. The incumbent is not particularly well known nor is she visible in the district on issues that matter to her constituents. This creates a strong opening to build with a variety of organizations and groups that care about issues affecting working-class residents, particularly housing issues, worker protections, and public schools. We have plans to connect with a wide variety of constituencies in the district, from unions to tenants associations to parent-teacher associations to churches, to build relationships and connect directly with voters. We believe we can consolidate progressive support (and become the clear progressive candidate), garner support from unions (particularly as a working-class candidate and former bargaining committee member), and make significant inroads with community institutions, such as churches and parents associations.

Communications

This race is an opportunity to electoralize several issues that materially impact the working people of the district. For example, the incumbent opposes Good Cause Eviction, despite the district being 78% renters and unaffordable rents being a primary driver of gentrification and working-class families in the district. This is just one example of the incumbent's antagonistic attitude towards the real needs of her district. As a lifelong Brooklynite, father, renter, retail worker, and parent organizer I have the experience to advocate for working-class priorities and the drive to do so earnestly and passionately.

Field

We plan to run a robust field operation throughout the district. We plan to make 3-5 complete field passes of the district, having tens of thousands of one-on-one conversations with voters. We already have over 100 field volunteers and are canvassing four days a week. Our field strategy will pair with our coalition building strategy; identifying community surrogates to support our campaign will be key to shaping our door-knocking strategy.

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

Our campaign has raised around \$46,000 out of our goal of \$250,000 (\$175,000 in public matching + \$75,000). We have crossed the threshold to qualify for matching funds and we seek to max out our match eligibility. Thus far most of our funding has come from small-dollar donations and we intend for that to continue. Call time is

going well and though we are still building our email list, that has also been a strong source of funds. We have launched a Peer to Peer and house party program. We will be focusing especially on in-district donors in order to max out the new matching funds program.

How many individual donors do you have?

We have 678 total individual donors.

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

We have been endorsed by NYC-DSA, Sunrise Movement NYC, State Senators Jabari Brisport, Kristen Gonzalez, and Julia Salazar, State Assemblymembers Marcela Mitaynes, Phara Souffrant-Forrest, Zohran Mamdani, Emily Gallagher, and Sarahana Sretha, and City Council Members Alexa Avilés and Tiffany Cabán.

ADDITIONAL INFO

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

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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

Responses to the questionnaire will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York State Legislature, and to issue our preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.