

## Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate,

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 June 27, 2022.**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)

We thank you very much for your response.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name

[Toby Ann Stavisky](#)

### Office Sought (New York State)

[Senate](#)

### District Number

[11](#)

### In which primary

### What party line/s are you running under?

[Democratic/Working Families Party](#)

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

[Democrat](#)

### Age

### Education

### Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

**Website** [stavisky.com](#)

**Twitter** [@tobystavisky](#)

**Facebook** [Facebook.com/toby.stavisky](#)

### 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, appearing to read "Tony". The letter "T" is large and stylized, with a horizontal bar extending to the left. The "o" is a simple circle, and the "ny" is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# ETHICS

**What is your opinion on the recently passed ethics reform, which replaced JCOPE with a new ethics oversight agency called Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government? Did you support this policy?**

I serve on the Ethics Committee and attended a hearing in Albany which provided oversight on JCOPE. I came to the conclusion that it was time to replace JCOPE with a new agency that was accountable and transparent. The change was made in the budget. I am optimistic because the law school deans are reviewing applications and using their insights to carefully determine qualifications rather than rubberstamp nominees.

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

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 ethics 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.**

Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy and we must ensure that they are conducted in a fair manner. That's why I supported legislation to expand early voting, improve the absentee ballot process. Results must be recorded accurately and in a timely manner. I look forward to working with organizational partners like Citizens Union to make that a reality.

**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?**

Yes

**Do you support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting?**

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.

As a caveat to this and other questions, I cannot commit to supporting any bills until I see the final bill, I have found that legislation may have constructive ideas, but also have deficiencies. In addition, many bills are negotiated with the Assembly and Governor.

## **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?**

Yes

**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 that when drawing new district lines, it should be done by a non-partisan entity. It must be transparent and have input from all stakeholders. Communities must be compact and contiguous.

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.

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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?**

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 plan to participate in the public campaign finance program, but it is difficult to predict the political landscape.



# 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.

Conceptually, yes. We need to take a close look and hold hearings. I support an independent judiciary at all levels. Experts have had a problem with the outgoing Chief Justice's plan

# 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: Gun violence. While I am proud to have supported legislation to strengthen gun laws, I am certain that we can do more to limit firearm violence

Second: Women's rights are under assault across the country. The Supreme Court's decision to repeal Roe v. Wade has had a crippling effect on a woman's right to bodily autonomy. We must work to ensure that a woman's rights are protected in NYS. In addition, we must protect our health care professions from liability and from those States which limit abortions. We must protect the State's address confidentiality program. I will always fight to ensure that every New Yorker has access to the reproductive care they need. Lastly, we must allow pharmacies to provide medication to those who request it.

Third: As chairwoman of the Higher Education Committee, I am proud of the increased funding for colleges and universities. There have been no tuition increases since I became Chairwoman and CUNY and SUNY have received unprecedented support. I hope to see the elimination of all fees, reductions in tuition and improvements in enrollments, especially at community colleges

**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?**

I will work to pass legislation that eliminates fees at all CUNY and SUNY institutions in NYS, reduce tuition rates and find ways to increase enrollment.

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

People need help in navigating government. I currently have staff fluent in four languages. The major areas constituents seek help are: local issues, personal problems, requests for information and information on legislative issues.

**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.**

Many, many years ago, I served on the Citizen's Union's committee on City Council legislation, evaluating the bills. I was also active at that time with the League of Women Voters. More recently I have worked with NYPD on their Explorer's program,

which works with neighborhood young people. I have also served on task forces to attract more women to government, especially the courts. For a long time, lack of diversity among judges has been an important issue.

**Do you currently live in this district? How long have you lived in it?**

Yes, I reside in Whitestone and my son attended local schools in community district 25

**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?**

In District 11, 98% is new. The Special Master drew lines that stretch from the Bronx (Rikers Island) to the Nassau County line. My colleagues have been introducing me to their communities and constituents. I am attending town halls and civic association meetings to get to understand the issues.

# 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 plan to wage an active campaign as I have always done. People know that I understand the issues, whether they be state or local, that I can accomplish many things and that I care about my constituents.

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

I have raised \$45,000 since the last filing

**How many individual donors do you have?**

85

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

NYSUT

1199

32 BJ

Eleanor's Legacy

Emily's List

NYSNA

DC 37

NYS AFL-CIO

CSA

CSEA

NY League of Conservation Voters

Local 3-IBEW

PSC-CUNY

# 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?

**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](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org)

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