

Candidate Questionnaire - 2022 Primary

Dear Iwen Chu,

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](#).

**

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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Iwen Chu

Office Sought (New York State)

Senate

District Number

17

In which primary

What party line/s are you running under?

Dem/WFP

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

Dem/WFP

Age

44

Education

Brooklyn College, Masters of Sociology

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Community Board member, Community Education Council member, president of Stars & Stripes Dem club

Campaign Contact Information

Email

Iwen@Iwenchu.com

Campaign Manager Name

Zunera Ahmed

Campaign Manager Email

zunera96@gmail.com

Scheduler contact info (If relevant)

Phone Number

(718) 795-3221

Website

lwenchu.com

Twitter

[@lwen4NY](https://twitter.com/lwen4NY)

Facebook

[@lwenforNewYork](https://www.facebook.com/lwenforNewYork)

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



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?

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

Yes

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?

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 these issues.

No

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.

Since I grew up in Taiwan, where every 18 years old citizen is automatically a voter in the country, I found it surprising that in NY, voting rights do not come automatically when you are a citizen. In order to encourage more voter engagement and voter turnout, I will support legislation related to automatic voter registration. I was also happy to see that this May State Senate passed a legislative package to increase public accountability at BOE and begin the reform. I also support 16-17 years old pre-registration so that our young minds will get the opportunity to be involved in policy making.

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, and putting it on the ballot in 2024?

Yes

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

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)

It is definitely very frustrating to see IRC failed to deliver its mission this year and caused more election resource wasting when we need to have 2 primary and the Assembly map will need to be redrawn again. I support a true independent set of body that will be held accountable by the people and not be appointed or controlled by any political parties.

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?

Yes

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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.

By observing NYC campaign finance matching fund program, I can surely see some grassroots candidates are benefiting from this and people's voices are not being ignored by the institutional donors. I certainly applaud this program but also would like to see its monitoring and inspecting system to be more held accountable since the funds are taxpayers money. If there is a lack of enforcement, afraid there will be campaigns taking advantage of this and taking dishonest action.

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: Language support in the State government agencies will be crucial for this immigrant-heavy district and that is what I will fight for them.

Second: Public safety and fully funding for local schools are also the major concerns from the communities that I am seeking to represent. Family values is an universal language for people in Southern Brooklyn and we need to ensure our seniors are safe when going out for grocery shopping and our children have a quality education.

Third:

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 would like to strengthen gun laws to eliminate gun violence but I understand there are many related legislation already being introduced so I would like to work with advocacy groups to offer my support.

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

Language support is the key for immigrant families to navigate our social system, education system and healthcare system. In this district that I am seeking to represent, the language needs are Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, Bangali, Russian, Italian and more. I am building relationships with each ethnic community and hoping to hire very diverse staffers with language assistance.

Also, as I was a local newspaper reporter and then Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Peter Abbate, I already have a strong tie with certain local organizations. If I get elected, I am expecting to work closely with local organizations who are also on the ground to provide services for local families.

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.

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

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

Yes, I set foot in this community and this district 18 years ago when I decided to come to the US to pursue my dream and here is also where I grew my family roots to raise my daughter with my husband.

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?

This is a brand new district with Asian plurality population. I have been serving in this district on multiple civic duties and services, such as Chief of Staff for AM Peter Abbate, board member on CB11, CEC 20 and HealthCare Choices. I have been running a very people-supported campaign and hundreds of volunteers have been knocking doors with me and helping me all along. The grassroots support I got is tremendous. However, given the low turnout in this area, I plan to have a strong and robust field outreach to all voters in this district and to have a strong mail program. Both are costly but necessary to inform voters about this election and my candidacy. Based on the data, I will need about 20,000 votes to be over 52% of the likely turnout. So I have raised over \$200,000 so far and will continue to raise another \$300,000 for my strong field and mail program.

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

I have raised over \$200,000 and now have a little over \$110,000 on hand.

How many individual donors do you have?

Upto to date, I have a little over 370 individual donors.

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

<https://iwenchu.com/endorsement>

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?

As an Asian American, I have a very distinguished hair color. My natural silver-ish hair makes me a very people-friendly person because everyday people will ask me "where did you dye your hair?" I always found it appreciated because in NY everyone is unique and everyone appreciates your difference. In my 10 years constituent services in AM Abbate office, people may not know my name but they do remember my hair so when I knock on their door, they immediately recognize me and lend their support.

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

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