

For Immediate Release

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Citizens Union Announces Preferences in Competitive Legislative Primaries

Good government group backs challengers Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, David Orkin, Diana Ayala, and Eon Huntley, along with Steven Raga, Grace Lee, Mike Scala, Patrick Martinez, Tunisia Morrison, Samantha Kattan, Wei-Li Tjong, Ryder Kessler, David Siffert, Eli Northrup, and Vanessa Aronson in competitive State Senate and Assembly primaries across Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn

To view Citizens Union's Voters Guide, [click here](#)

New York, N.Y. (May 14, 2026) – Today, Citizens Union announced its preferences in 14 Democratic primaries for State Senate and Assembly across Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. The result of a rigorous evaluation process, Citizens Union's preferences include several challengers to incumbents and candidates running in open-seat contests that will shape the future of Albany.

“With so many open seats and competitive primaries this year, voters have an important opportunity to send a slate of reform-minded New Yorkers to represent them in Albany,” said **Grace Rauh**, Executive Director of Citizens Union. “The candidates preferred by Citizens Union demonstrated a strong commitment to ethics, transparency, accountability, and effective governance, along with a clear understanding of the needs of their communities. We are proud to support this impressive group of candidates.”

In the race for State Senate District 12 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Steven Raga**. A current Assemblymember, Raga demonstrated a strong commitment to government transparency and voting rights reform, and his legislative track record shows clear support for Citizens Union's priorities, in particular his work championing the Student Voter Empowerment Act and introducing a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) response-time reduction bill that passed both chambers.

In the race for State Senate District 13 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas**. Citizens Union was impressed by her strong engagement with policy questions on campaign finance and reform issues, as well as her collaborative approach and ability to build bridges across the district's political landscape.

In the race for State Senate District 27 (Manhattan), Citizens Union prefers **Grace Lee**. Lee has been an ally of Citizens Union while in office and supports nearly all of Citizens Union's reform agenda. In the Assembly, she passed legislation requiring the NYC Board of Elections to notify local officials of polling site changes and introduced legislation to rein in public spending on litigation involving elected officials.

In the race for Assembly District 23 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Mike Scala**. Scala impressed Citizens Union with his strong command of campaign finance and government transparency issues, as well as his detailed familiarity with the district and its constituents.

In the race for Assembly District 30 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Patrick Martinez**. Citizens Union noted Martinez's comprehensive knowledge of his district's diverse neighborhoods and found him well-

positioned to be effective in Albany. Citizens Union found his emphasis on independence compelling and his civic track record strong.

In the race for Assembly District 32 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Tunisia Morrison**. Morrison fully supported Citizens Union's reform agenda and placed ethics and government transparency at the top of her priorities. Citizens Union valued her understanding of how Albany operates and her thoughtful answers on community engagement and legislative work.

In the race for Assembly District 37 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **Samantha Kattan**. Kattan is supportive of Citizens Union's reform agenda, except for open primaries, a position she acknowledged as still evolving and expressed openness to revisiting her position through continued dialogue. Citizens Union was impressed by her clear command of district issues and her demonstrated ability to build coalitions, good indicators of one's ability to advance legislation.

In the race for Assembly District 38 (Queens), Citizens Union prefers **David Orkin**. Citizens Union found Orkin to be a thoughtful candidate with substantive policy thinking on the issues facing his district and appreciated his openness to continued dialogue with reform-oriented organizations.

In the race for Assembly District 56 (Brooklyn), Citizens Union prefers **Eon Huntley**. Huntley fully supported Citizens Union's reform agenda, and Citizens Union was impressed by his principled responses when pressed on building support for issues like open primaries.

In the race for Assembly District 65 (Manhattan), Citizens Union prefers **Wei-Li Tjong**. Tjong fully supported Citizens Union's reform agenda and emphasized campaign finance reform as a top priority. Citizens Union found him steeped in knowledge on good government issues and confident that he would make reform a genuine priority in office.

In the six-way race for Assembly District 66 (Manhattan), Citizens Union jointly prefers **Ryder Kessler** and **David Siffert**. Citizens Union found Kessler energetic, well-rounded, and deeply knowledgeable about reform priorities, while Siffert offered detailed insight into Citizens Union's issues and an impressive ability to work behind the scenes to advance priorities.

In the race for Assembly District 68 (Manhattan), Citizens Union prefers **Diana Ayala**. Ayala fully supported Citizens Union's reform agenda and offered personal and passionate context for her priorities, particularly around mental health, the opioid crisis, and NYCHA conditions. Her sixteen years in City Hall have given her the knowledge of how government works and how bills are moved. She will be an effective advocate for her district.

In the race for Assembly District 69 (Manhattan), Citizens Union prefers **Eli Northrup**. Northrup is a well-prepared candidate who presented nuanced, thorough views on policy and government and demonstrated a clear fluency in how Albany works. He supported all of Citizens Union's reform agenda and identified campaign finance reform and judicial transparency as his top good government priorities.

In the race for Assembly District 73 (Manhattan), Citizens Union prefers **Vanessa Aronson**. Aronson fully supported Citizens Union's reform agenda and identified campaign finance reform as her top legislative priority, drawing directly on her experience as a candidate, when she was outspent by super PAC donors in her 2025 City Council race. Citizens Union was impressed by her idealism and commitment to reform.

Support for Citizens Union's reform agenda was the primary criterion used in deciding whether to support a candidate. Other criteria considered in evaluating candidates and campaigns included:

- A record of ethical integrity
- Commitment and ability to advance Citizens Union’s goals, if elected
- For incumbents: demonstrated support for Citizens Union’s issues while in office
- Evidence of ability to wage an effective and competitive campaign
- Reliance on small-donor, local financing of the campaign
- Candidates’ grasp of issues specific to the race’s jurisdiction and whether they propose thoughtful solutions to represent constituents’ interests

Citizens Union’s preferences for the June 2026 primary election are as follows:

State Senate

District 12 (Queens – Astoria, Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, Maspeth, Ridgewood, Woodhaven)
Steven Raga

District 13 (Queens – Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Corona, Elmhurst, North Corona, Flushing Meadows)
Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas

District 27 (Manhattan – Tribeca, Greenwich Village, Chinatown, West Village, Alphabet City, Lower East Side, East Village, Financial District)
Grace Lee

Assembly

District 23 (Queens – Broad Channel, Howard Beach, Rockaways, Ozone Park)
Mike Scala

District 30 (Queens – Woodside, Elmhurst, Maspeth)
Patrick Martinez

District 32 (Queens – Jamaica, South Jamaica, Rochdale Village)
Tunisia Morrison

District 37 (Queens – Long Island City, Sunnyside, Ridgewood, Maspeth)
Samantha Kattan

District 38 (Queens – Glendale, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Ridgewood, Woodhaven)
David Orkin

District 56 (Brooklyn – Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights)
Eon Huntley

District 65 (Manhattan – Chinatown, Lower East Side)
Wei-Li Tjong

District 66 (Manhattan – Greenwich Village, Tribeca, SoHo, NoHo, Battery Park City, Meatpacking District)
Ryder Kessler
David Siffert

District 68 (Manhattan – East Harlem, Central Harlem, Upper East Side, Randalls Island)
Diana Ayala

District 69 (Manhattan – Upper West Side, Bloomingdale, Manhattan Valley, Morningside Heights)
Eli Northrup

District 73 (Manhattan – Murray Hill, Turtle Bay, Sutton Place, Midtown East, Upper East Side)
Vanessa Aronson

Citizens Union's preference in the race for New York City Comptroller will be announced separately next week.

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