



2026 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York State Legislature

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

THIS IS A BLANK QUESTIONNAIRE – YOU CAN SEND IT WITH YOUR RESPONSES TO [CANDIDATES@CITIZENSUNION.ORG](mailto:candidates@citizensunion.org) OR SUBMIT IT ONLINE HERE

Congratulations on your decision to run for a seat in the New York State Legislature! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serving the public.

For over 125 years, Citizens Union (CU) has been devoted to holding our local government accountable with the highest ethical standards and fighting for political reforms that improve New York democracy (<https://citizensunion.org/issues/>). To promote a competitive and diverse political culture, a fair and open political process, and accountable and responsible government, we evaluate candidates running for office and back those who strongly support reform. Our evaluations are done through questionnaires, independent research, and interviews conducted by our Local Candidates Committee. (<https://citizensunion.org/portfolio-item/citizens-union-2025-candidate-evaluation-info-for-candidates/>).

As a prerequisite for receiving the support of Citizens Union, please complete the following questionnaire and submit your response by Friday, March 27, 2026. As you complete the form, you can click “Save” and return to the form later. All short answers have a 250-word limit. Once you have completed the questionnaire and submitted your response to us, you will receive a copy of your submission. Your submission will be posted on our website (with the exception of contact info).

Upon receipt of your submission, we will reach out to you or your staff to schedule a virtual interview with members of our Local Candidate Committee. The interview will be recorded. Shortly thereafter, we will announce our support in key priority races to our members and on our website and other channels. 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.

Please feel free to reach out to Citizens Union with any questions or comments at candidates@citizensunion.org.

Thank you very much. We look forward to your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Name	David Siffert
District	AD66
In which primary	Democratic Primary on June 23rd
Age	41
Education	NYU Law (09), UChicago (06)
Current job, position, or occupation	Executive Director, State Government Initiative at NYU Law
Other positions or roles	Adjunct Professor of Clinical Law at NYU Law
Previous jobs or positions	Legal Director, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project Director of Research & Projects, Center on Civil Justice at NYU Law Litigation Associate, Boies Schiller & Flexner Law Clerk, New York State Court of Appeals Judge Robert Smith Law Clerk, Southern District of New York Judge Barbara Jones Tax Associate, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher
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X	@siffertforNY
Facebook	https://facebook.com/siffertforny
Instagram	@siffertforNY
Bluesky	N/A

Other social media platforms	TikTok: @siffertforNY
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General

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

1. Housing:

My top priority is fully funding the Housing Access Voucher Program. I will also prioritize the Social Housing Development Authority, and the Tenant Power Act, investments in public housing, and policies to allow older/disabled New Yorkers to live and age in place.

I will fight to maximize the construction of deeply affordable housing, and to create a statewide, fully-funded right to counsel for any New Yorker facing eviction.

To help fund these investments, I would introduce a residential vacancy tax.

2. Stopping ICE:

I've been leading canvasses of local businesses in my neighborhood to prepare them for ICE raids. I went to the Texas border as an attorney to represent incarcerated mothers and children and get them released.

I was on the policy subcommittee for the New York For All coalition and on the NY Immigration Coalition's Immigrant Leaders Council. Passing New York For All and the Access to Representation Act will be two of my top priorities.

I've also been organizing with the Campaign to End Qualified Immunity, so we can hold ICE accountable.

3. Regulating AI:

The federal government isn't mitigating the risks of discrimination, privacy violations, environmental harm, disruption of labor markets, or even catastrophic damage that AI poses, and Albany isn't making progress either.

I have spent the last 4 years working on tech policy. Unless Albany understands the policy issues at play, New Yorkers will be at serious risk—I'm running to be Albany's tech expert.

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

By the time of the election, I will have lived in the district for 20 years.

I have led organized business canvasses in the West Village to train local businesses to prepare for ICE raids.

I sued Mount Sinai Health System to save Beth Israel Hospital, and helped keep Beth Israel open for an extra year.

I have been very actively involved with the Village Independent Democrats, including serving as President (2019-20), during which time I helped transition the club to remote functions during the pandemic (we were one of the first Democratic clubs to do so successfully) and led our campaign work for Joe Biden in 2020. I have also served as Chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Executive Committee Member, County Committee Member, and Judicial Delegate.

- What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics and anti-corruption, checks and balances, government transparency and oversight, police accountability). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

In 2024, I put together a FOIL Working Group in which Citizen Union participated. The group, now run by Reinvent Albany, focused on reforming FOIL so that it actually works. I helped write several pieces of New York State legislation for the group, including on FOIL timeline, FOIL appeals, FOIL reporting, and FOIL attorneys fees. I also helped draft NYC FOIL reporting and transparency legislation that is now law.

I have also been a lead advocate for city council legislation, now passed into law, that improves the functioning of OIG-NYPD.

I have also worked with Citizen Union on issues including even year elections and on BOE reform.

Elections and Voting

- Do you support opening up New York City's closed primary system, allowing over 1 million unaffiliated voters that are currently locked out of the election to participate in the primary election?

Yes

- Will you oppose any attempt to permanently remove redistricting protections from the state constitution, including existing protections of minority voting rights, population equity, ban on political gerrymandering, and consideration of communities of interest?

Permanently, yes – I don't think it makes sense for NY to be one of the few states that bans political gerrymandering, thereby allowing other states to have outsized influence in the national political conversation, but I think we should move to a national rule or inter-state agreement banning partisan gerrymandering.

- Do you support reforming the process of filling vacancies in the state legislature by implementing nonpartisan special elections (like the system used in New York City) instead of giving party officials the power to decide who will run as the party nominee?

Yes, very strongly, though I would make some tweaks – for example, in Council District 3, there is a special election and a primary a month-and-a-half apart. That seems confusing and bad for democracy. But ranked-choice, non-partisan special elections are the way to go for sure.

- Do you support restructuring the New York City Board of Elections to make it more professionalized and transparent, and less dependent on political parties ([S699 Krueger/A1852 Rozic](#))?

Yes, that's been a major priority for me as Legislative Affairs Committee Chair of the Village Independent Democrats.

- Do you oppose requiring registered voters to show ID to vote in New York State?

Yes, this makes voting hard or even impossible for many eligible voters.

- Do you support providing time extenders for polling place voting hours in cases where an emergency leads to voting being disrupted or shut down ([S4602A Gounardes/A5846A Gibbs](#))

Yes, strongly. We just saw in the Texas Democratic Primary why this is so important.

- Do you support the Democracy During Detention Act ([S440 Myrie/A2121 Walker](#)), which establishes the election infrastructure to make voting accessible for all those eligible to vote who are detained in jails?

Yes, and I am currently organizing meetings with legislators in support of it in my role as legislative Affairs Committee Chair of the Village Independent Democrats.

Campaign Finance

- Are you a public campaign finance participant? If not, please explain why.

Yes.

- Are you a supporter of the state's public campaign matching funds program, and do you commit to ensuring the program is fully funded?

Fully funding the program ensures its budget meets the program's needs and demand.

Yes. I was an early advocate for it. I remember calling Assemblymember Deborah Glick to try to get her to support it back in 2019, and joining numerous early meetings for it. The current system is imperfect – needs to be stronger, tighter caps on donations and overall spending – but it's much better than nothing.

- Do you support requiring disclosure of a contributor's employer in campaign finance reports? ([S1910 Rivera/A3092 Carroll](#))

Yes.

- Do you support requiring Independent Expenditure entities (Super PACs) to disclose their top three donors on ads, similar to the requirements under NYC law? ([S8445 Fahy/A10097 Solages](#))

Yes. This is incredibly important. We also need to make sure the top-three donors are not themselves shell entities.

- Do you support applying lower contribution limits to lobbyists and people doing business with the state or seeking contracts from the state? New York City imposes lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and individuals doing business with the City.

Yes. I support lower contribution limits in general, but even moreso for lobbyists.

Ethics

- Do you support requiring lobbyists to report their campaign contributions and fundraising activity, as well as campaign consulting services they provide?

Yes. As a former lobbyist for the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, I always thought it was wrong that I didn't have to file these disclosures.

- Do you support requiring the disclosure of lobbying in connection with a nomination or confirmation of a nominee that requires Senate confirmation in lobbying reports? ([S374 Gianaris/A7456 McDonald](#))

Yes.

- Do you support codifying sexual harassment as conduct that violates the public officers and employees code of ethics? ([Gounardes S4197/Kelles A6201](#))

Yes. This is an extremely important issue, and it's embarrassing that it's taken so long.

Police Accountability

- Do you support giving the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board access to certain sealed and confidential records in matters involving potential police discipline? ([S4966 Bailey/A292 Cruz](#))

Yes. I have long pushed for increased CCRB access to information, most recently testifying in favor of city council legislation requiring access to body camera footage.

- Do you support transferring disciplinary hearings involving police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)? ([S3927 Myrie](#))

Yes, strongly. I have advocated for this legislation and similar legislation in numerous capacities, including with VID.

Revising City Charters

- Do you support banning the establishment of "lame duck" charter revision commissions, established by mayors right before the end of their term? ([S8934 Liu](#))

Yes, and I also support ending the ability of the Mayor to block other charter revision commissions.

- Do you support mandating that charter commissions conduct their process over a mandatory minimum timeline of 180 days before issuing recommended ballot questions to a city's charter?

Yes, a rushed process helps no one.