



# Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee NYS Legislative Election - Primary 2026

**Name** Grace Lee

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Office Sought (New York State)**

**District Number** 27

**In which primary**

**Age** 46

**Education** Columbia University - BA | University of Chicago - MBA

**Current job, position, or occupation**  
State Assemblymember for District 65

**Other positions or roles**  
N/A

**Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement**  
Community organizer, Co-Founder of Children First, Small business owner

## Campaign Contact Information

**Website** <https://www.graceleefornyc.com/>

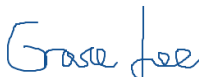
**Twitter** @graceleefornyc

**Facebook** @graceleefornyc

**Instagram** @graceleefornyc

**Bluesky** N/A

**Other social platforms** N/A

**Signature**  


## GOALS AND PLANS

In addition to evaluating stances on the reform issues, Citizens Union considers the campaign goals articulated to voters, issues specific to the district, and the ability propose thoughtful solutions to represent constituents' interests.

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

As State Senator, my top priority will be affordability, especially housing and childcare, the two biggest cost pressures facing working families. On housing, that means fully funding NYCHA, expanding voucher programs like the Housing Access Voucher Program, and expanding SCRIE and DRIE so seniors and New Yorkers with disabilities can remain in their homes. As an Assemblymember, I helped pass Good Cause Eviction, secured nearly \$400 million in ERAP funding to keep NYCHA and Section 8 families housed, and delivered 50% tax cut to help stabilize Mitchell-Lama developments. In the State Senate, I will continue to hold bad landlords accountable, strengthen tenant protections, and fund legal services so tenants have representation in court. On childcare, I supported more than \$2 billion in statewide investments, including \$350 million for New York City, and pushed to expand universal 3-K and Pre-K. I also supported expanding the Empire State Child Tax Credit and creating additional relief for families. When childcare is unaffordable or unreliable, families are forced into impossible tradeoffs. I will continue fighting for lasting investments and higher wages for childcare workers.

My second priority will be standing up to Trump and ICE, as immigrant New Yorkers face growing fear of aggressive federal enforcement.

Finally, we must fund these priorities by making our tax system fairer by passing the Invest in Our New York and Fair Share package so the ultra-wealthy and most profitable corporations pay their fair share.

### **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?**

I am a longtime resident of Lower Manhattan, a mother of three, and an organizer at heart. Before I went to Albany, I organized alongside families in Lower Manhattan to keep them safer from a dangerous brownfield site and with deaf tenants on the Lower East Side to hold an abusive landlord accountable. In both cases, we didn't just protest – we organized, and we won.

As an Assemblymember, I brought that same approach to Albany. When thousands of NYCHA and Section 8 families were at risk of eviction, I helped lead the fight to secure nearly \$400 million in ERAP funding so families could stay in their homes. I have delivered historic funding to the Asian American community, advanced legislation to protect workers and expand opportunity, and consistently fought to ensure government delivers real results for the people it serves.

I've also delivered for my district through hands-on constituent services. In just three years, my office has closed over 700 constituent cases. We've also welcomed more than 100 interns, giving young people real opportunities to get involved in public service.

Our communities deserve proven leadership that can bring people together, take on complex challenges, and deliver real results. My approach has always been grounded in showing up, building coalitions, and following through – doing the hard work to ensure every neighborhood gets the resources it needs. I have been, and will continue to be, on the ground in our communities, fighting to deliver for the people I represent.

### **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.**

When fair elections are under attack, we must ensure access to the ballot box. My bill A7618C, signed into law last year, ensures elected officials and party leaders are notified of polling site changes in a timely manner so we can keep communities informed and ensure voters can make their voices heard. This was a

direct response to poll site changes that made it harder for many of my constituents in public housing to vote. I also support A1177 to accept absentee ballots sealed with non-traditional methods without signs of tampering, making voting more accessible and secure.

I support improving government transparency and accountability and have introduced and backed legislation to do so. Last year, I introduced the STOP Act to rein in government spending on litigation, including the over \$20M in taxpayer funds former Governor Cuomo has used to harass and re-victimize survivors.

With the federal government abusing constitutional and civil rights, New York has a responsibility to act. I introduced the ICE Contract Transparency Act, requiring private entities contracting with ICE to register those agreements in a public database, increasing transparency into ICE's footprint in New York. I am also fighting for a package of legislation – including New York for All, the MELT Act, the RADAR Act, and the New York Civil Rights Act – to rein in abuses and ensure state and local resources are used to keep New Yorkers safe, not to advance a mass-deportation agenda.

# ELECTIONS AND VOTING

**1. 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

## Comments (optional)

I support opening New York City's primary system and moving to a semi-open model that allows voters to participate in one primary election of their choice each year.

Primary elections play a decisive role in determining who ultimately holds office, particularly in jurisdictions like New York City, where general elections are often less competitive. Under the current closed system, more than one million unaffiliated voters are excluded from this critical stage of the democratic process.

Allowing voters to choose a primary in which to participate would expand access and strengthen civic engagement, while still preserving the structure of party-based elections. This approach would ensure that more New Yorkers have a meaningful voice in shaping electoral outcomes.

**2. 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?**

Yes

## Comments (optional)

Redistricting protections are embedded in the state constitution as a fundamental safeguard for our democracy. These provisions, including protections for minority voting rights, population equity, prohibitions on political gerrymandering, and the recognition of communities of interest, are essential to ensuring fair and representative elections.

I will firmly oppose any effort to weaken or remove these protections. Preserving an independent and transparent redistricting process is critical to maintaining public trust and ensuring that all New Yorkers have an equal and meaningful voice in our democracy.

**3. 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

**4. 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

**5. Do you oppose requiring registered voters to show ID to vote in New York State?**

Yes

**Comments (optional)**

Requiring voters to show ID at a polling site would discourage voting and disenfranchise marginalized communities. Many New Yorkers—particularly low-income individuals and people of color—do not have a driver's license or other form of state ID. Requiring ID to vote would amount to a poll tax for disadvantaged communities. New York must encourage voting and make it easier to do so, not put up barriers that will keep people away from the polls.

**6. 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

**7. 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

# CAMPAIGN FINANCE

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

Yes

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

Yes

## Comments (optional)

New York's public campaign matching funds program ensures that campaigns are powered by the people rather than by corporations and special-interest donors. The program gives a more diverse group of people the opportunity to run and get on the ballot. This helps ensure our elected officials are representative of the communities they serve. Anyone dedicated to public service should have a chance to run for office, not just those who can forge relationships with wealthy donors and influential super PACs. I strongly support fully funding the state's matching funds program to limit the influence of money in politics and improve our democratic process.

**10. Do you support requiring disclosure of a contributor's employer in campaign finance reports? (S1910 Rivera/A3092 Carroll)**

Yes

**11. 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/A10097Solages)**

Yes

**12. 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

# ETHICS

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

Yes

## Comments (optional)

I support requiring lobbyists to disclose their campaign contributions, fundraising activity, and any campaign consulting services they provide. New York already recognizes the significant influence lobbying can have on government decision-making and requires disclosure of those activities. Extending similar transparency requirements to political activity is a logical and necessary step to ensure consistency and accountability.

The public has a clear interest in understanding how campaigns and candidates are supported and influenced. Strengthening disclosure requirements would enhance transparency, reduce the potential for conflicts of interest, and help build greater public confidence in the integrity of our elections.

**14. Do you support including lobbying regarding a nomination or confirmation of a nominee that requires Senate confirmation in lobbying reports? (S374 Gianaris/A7456 McDonald)**

Yes

**15. Do you support codifying sexual harassment as conduct that violates the public officers and employees code of ethics? (Gounardes S4197/Kelles A6201)**

Yes

## Comments (optional)

I support A6201, which would expand the ethical duties of public officers and employees to include compliance with the State Human Rights Law and applicable workplace policies. Codifying sexual harassment as a violation of the code of ethics is an important step to ensure consistent standards of conduct across government. It strengthens accountability mechanisms, reinforces expectations for professional behavior, and helps ensure that violations are addressed through both ethical and legal frameworks.

## **POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

**16. 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

**17. Do you support transferring disciplinary hearings involving police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)? (S3927 Myrie)**

Yes

## REVISING CITY CHARTERS

15. 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

16. 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

## ADDITIONAL INFO