

**Name** Jenifer Rajkumar

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Office Sought (New York State)** Assembly

**District Number** 38

**In which primary** Democratic

**Age** 43

**Education** Stanford Law School (JD), University of Pennsylvania (BA)

### Current job, position, or occupation

State Assemblywoman, District 38

### Other positions or roles

Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Diversity in Law

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

Director of Immigration Affairs for the State of NY (2017-2019)

Professor at CUNY's Lehman College (2014-2019)

Women's Campaign Fund (Board of Directors)

Represent Women (Board of Directors)

Sanctuary for Families (Legal Advisory Committee)

## Campaign Contact Information

**Website** [www.jeniferfornny.com](http://www.jeniferfornny.com)

**Twitter** @JeniferRajkumar

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**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?**

My top three campaign goals are to expand economic opportunity, make housing attainable, and help small businesses grow. Together, these goals are about restoring the basic promise that in New York, hard work should lead to progress.

First, I will fight to help working families build wealth, not just get by. That means advancing policies such as first time homebuyer assistance, support for worker ownership and cooperatives, stronger protections against wage theft, and innovative ideas like universal basic stock so more New Yorkers can gain equity in our economy. My goal is to make wealth building possible for people who have been locked out for too long.

Second, I will work to make housing more affordable and accessible. Opportunity begins with a stable place to live. I will support increased housing production, conversion of vacant properties into housing, expansion of middle income housing, and cooperative housing models that help families put down roots without being priced out.

Third, I will make New York a better place to start and grow a business. Small businesses are one of the clearest pathways to upward mobility. I will push to streamline licensing and permitting, expand access to capital for immigrant and first time entrepreneurs, and revitalize commercial corridors in underserved neighborhoods.

My approach is practical: Build coalitions, pass legislation, and focus on implementation. New Yorkers just want a fair shot and a pathway to reach their dreams. That is the opportunity agenda I am running on.

### **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 have lived in my South Queens district for the past eight years, and my roots in this community go back much further because my family is originally from South Queens. This is not just the district I represent. It is home.

I am especially proud of delivering tangible results for the people of this district. I authored and passed the SMOKEOUT Act, giving New York stronger tools to shut down illegal smoke shops that were endangering our neighborhoods and undermining quality of life. Public safety and neighborhood integrity matter deeply in South Queens, and I was proud to lead on an issue residents felt urgently.

I am also proud to have led and won the fight to make Diwali a public school holiday in New York. As the first South Asian woman ever elected to New York State office, that victory meant representation for an entire community that had long gone unseen. It was an impossible victory that showed our district can lead the whole state forward.

I am proud as well of passing landmark human rights protections for domestic workers, many of whom are immigrant women whose labor has too often been undervalued. And I worked to strengthen New York's cybersecurity by preventing the state from procuring technology that leaves us vulnerable to foreign cyberattacks.

I have fought to make South Queens safer, more respected, and better represented. I am proud that my work reflects the everyday concerns and the larger aspirations of the community I call home.

**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.**

Service to people is my life, and the integrity of government matters deeply to me. I believe public office is a public trust, not a vehicle for personal profit or greed. That is why I have built a substantial body of work on ethics, transparency, and accountability.

A leading example is my Sunshine Act, A9559, which would require lobbyists to disclose whether they are supporting or opposing legislation, so the public can see not just that lobbying is happening, but what side powerful interests are on. That kind of transparency is essential to exposing backroom influence and restoring trust in government.

My reform work also extends to fiscal transparency and checks and balances. A5421 requires objective economic impact calculations in legislative fiscal notes. A4745 would ban lump-sum budget appropriations and require itemized appropriations. A3537 and A4843 strengthen rainy-day reserves and balanced-budget protections, with A4843 also prohibiting messages of necessity for budget bills.

I have also introduced bills to strengthen ethics in public contracting and campaign finance. A10461 requires city contractors and subcontractors to disclose relationships with public servants and affirm compliance with conflict-of-interest laws. A10462 penalizes unauthorized subcontracting and false claims. A826 closes a campaign-finance loophole by treating certain contingency-fee and retainer contracts as "doing business" for contribution-limit purposes.

Overall, my goal is simple: a government that works for the people, in the open, and with integrity.

# 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)

In many parts of New York City, the primary is effectively the decisive election. That means far too many voters are excluded from the most meaningful stage of our democracy simply because they are not registered with a political party. Young voters, new voters, immigrants who have recently become citizens, and independent-minded New Yorkers are especially affected. That is not healthy for democratic participation or public trust.

Our election system should encourage engagement, not put up barriers. If voters are qualified to participate in the general election, they should not be locked out of the contests that often determine who will ultimately hold office. Opening primaries would make our system more inclusive, more representative, and more responsive to the full electorate.

I also believe this reform would encourage candidates to speak to a broader cross-section of New Yorkers, rather than only to a narrow slice of partisan primary voters. That can help reward coalition-building, problem-solving, and accountability.

At a time when so many people feel alienated from politics, we should be looking for ways to bring more people into the process. Opening the primary system would be an important step toward a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

**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)

Yes. I would oppose any attempt to permanently remove redistricting protections from the New York State Constitution. Weakening these protections would open the door to maps drawn for political self-interest rather than public representation.

Having been through one redistricting process already as a state legislator, I know that redistricting is one of the most consequential acts in government because it shapes whose voices are heard and whose communities are kept whole. Minority voting protections are especially important to ensure that historically underrepresented communities are not diluted or pushed to the margins. Population equity is necessary so that each person's vote carries roughly equal weight. The ban on gerrymandering helps stop politicians from manipulating district lines for partisan gain. And recognizing communities of interest protects neighborhoods with shared histories, needs, and identities from being arbitrarily split apart.

**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

### **Comments (optional)**

New Yorkers deserve an elections system worthy of the greatest city in the world, and I support reforms that bring us closer to that standard. For too long, New Yorkers have seen an agency that is too often defined by patronage, confusion, and preventable failure, when what voters deserve is competence, fairness, and public confidence. S699/A1852 is designed to move the Board in that direction.

Elections should be run by people chosen for skill, integrity, and readiness to administer complex systems accurately and on time.

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

Yes

**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.**

No

## Comments (if needed)

I strongly support the goals that animate public campaign finance reform: increasing public trust, amplifying small donors, and making our democracy more inclusive and accountable. Those are important values, and they are fully consistent with my broader commitment to good-government reform and political transparency.

My decision not to participate in the public matching program this cycle was not a reflection of disagreement with those goals. Rather, it was a campaign-specific decision about what was the best fit under the circumstances of this election. I respect the intent of the program and believe it has the potential to play an important role in strengthening democratic participation over the long term.

As the state's new public campaign finance program continues to develop, I believe it is important to keep refining it so that it is as clear, accessible, and effective as possible, and so that more candidates can participate with confidence.

I remain deeply committed to campaign finance transparency, robust disclosure, and reforms that reduce the influence of money in politics. I would welcome continued efforts to strengthen the system and advance the shared goal of a more open, ethical, and trusted democracy in New York.

**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

**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

**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

## **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

### What else would you like us to know about yourself?

What else I would like you to know is that I believe deeply in John F. Kennedy’s words: “The life of service is a constant test of your will.” I believe that with my whole heart. Public service is not something I do part-time or only when it is convenient. It is my life’s passion, and I approach it that way every day, 24/7.

I have spent my entire career trying to make a difference and advance social justice, using every level of power and every tool available to me. As a lawyer, I fought for workers and vulnerable people. In government, I worked to protect immigrants, expand opportunity, and deliver justice through public policy. As an elected official, I have continued that mission by combining legislative action, constituent services, advocacy, and coalition-building to create real results for the people I serve.

I believe government must be a force for good in people’s daily lives. It must be ethical, effective, and relentlessly focused on opening doors of opportunity. I bring urgency, discipline, and heart to this work because I never forget that public office is a public trust. Service to others is not just part of my career. It is my calling.