



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	Stephanie Ruskay
District	69th Assembly District
In which primary	Democratic
Age	51
Education	
Current job, position, or occupation	Associate Dean of the Rabbinical School of the Jewish Theological Seminary; Executive Director of the Hendel Center for Ethics and Justice
Other positions or roles	
Previous jobs or positions	
Contact information	
Email	srr@stephanieruskay.com
Campaign Manager Name	James Phillips
Campaign Manager Email	james@stephanieruskay.com
Phone Number	615 414 5724
Website	stephanieruskay.com
X	stephanieruskay
Facebook	Stephanie Ruskay for Assembly
Instagram	sruskay
Bluesky	
Other social media platforms	

General

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

My number one priority is doing everything I can to pass New York for All and get it signed into law. New York State and its law enforcement officers should not cooperate with ICE whatsoever. I'm firmly committed to dramatically expanding the supply of housing in New York City and New York State - the vacancy rate in my neighborhood is 1.4%. It's just impossible to find a place to live. The Faith-Based Housing Act is something I'll strongly support, and I'm a uniquely powerful advocate for this legislation based on my own professional background. Finally, I want to strongly support public schools in my district and New York State. I'll work with teachers, education experts, and other stakeholders to ensure we have high quality education, high quality outcomes, high quality staff, and high quality buildings.

- **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'm proud to have called this district home for more than 40 years. I grew up in a Mitchell-Lama building on W 97th, went to college in the district, have worked in the district nearly my entire career, and am now raising my family here. The Upper West Side is my home, and it would be an honor to represent this community in Albany.

The majority of my accomplishments have been in training rabbis and expanding the Jewish community's work to include justice in an organized way. I'm now turning my focus to AD69 as a critical place to make change and protect and model democracy in an authoritarian time.

- **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.**

I have been running non-partisan voter registration for over a decade in Morningside Heights and Harlem. We engaged students, faculty and neighbors in the JTS area and we collaborated with Exodus Transitional Community to work with people who are formerly incarcerated to know if and when they are eligible to vote, and to get them registered and promote voting as a civic responsibility. This was often a heavy lift because many of the formerly incarcerated people we encountered felt that their voices did not matter and voting was useless. We worked to counter this narrative and engage them, but their experiences truly made an impact on me.

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, I do support opening up our primary elections.

- **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?**

I'll oppose attempts to remove redistricting protections from the state's constitution.

- **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, I do.

- **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](#))?**

I do support a restructuring of the BOE, and I'm proud to be endorsed by the Assembly sponsor of this legislation - Nily Rozic!

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

I do oppose requiring registered voters to show ID in New York State, and the conversation around the SAVE Act is very worrying.

- **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, of course. The right to vote is sacrosanct.

- **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?**

Absolutely.

Campaign Finance

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

I am, and very grateful for it!

- **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.

I am a supporter, and I commit to ensuring the program is fully funded.

- 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.
- 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

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

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.
- 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

- 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.

- **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.