



# Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee NYS Legislative Election - Primary 2026

**Name** Samantha Kattan

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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

**District Number** 37

**In which primary** Democratic

**Age** 38

**Education** Master's in Urban Planning

### Current job, position, or occupation

N/A - was a contracts administrator at a housing nonprofit until 3/12 when I left to focus on campaigning.

### Other positions or roles

N/A

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

I have not run for office before. I have been a member of NYC-DSA since 2017, and was a member of the Chicago News Guild in 2022-2023.

## Campaign Contact Information

**Website** samanthaforqueens.com

**Twitter** @samantha4queens

**Instagram** @samantha4queens

**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?**

1. Protect tenants by defending rent stabilization, expanding good cause eviction, and by creating opportunities for tenants to gain ownership of housing via legislation like TOPA (Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act).
2. Tax the Rich to implement an affordability agenda. We need to increase taxes on corporations and the wealthiest New Yorkers to fund programs that will benefit working class New Yorkers.
3. Pass and sustain universal childcare. There are many families with young kids in AD37, and we are struggling to afford childcare! I believe we must go beyond the commitments that Hochul made last week and ensure we have long-term funding in place to sustain truly universal childcare for every child from 6 weeks to 5 years old, and to ensure that the program is implemented well, with living wages for childcare workers.

## **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've lived in the district since 2020 and while most of my organizing work has been citywide, I've volunteered in neighborhood mutual aid projects through a hub and community center called Ridgewood Commons.

Citywide, as a housing organizer with UHAB (Urban Homesteading Assistance Board) and ACRE (Action Center on Race and the Economy), I have spent my career fighting for stronger tenant protections, as well as to expand opportunities to create social housing. I have been to Albany many times as an organizer, alongside hundreds and sometimes thousands of other tenants, and I would be proud to return as an Assemblymember who would be continuing the fight for housing justice.

My proudest accomplishment from my work at UHAB is co-founding a member-led tenant group in Brownsville called HOPE. Before HOPE, Brownsville did not have an organized neighborhood-based group fighting to protect tenants' rights. As a result, the local elected officials would often take the side of landlords and homeowners on legislative issues. By creating HOPE, we amplified the voices of tenants in this part of Brooklyn, added capacity to the statewide tenants' movement, and solidified at least some support for tenants issues from local electeds (of course, that is always an ongoing project). We took a risk by taking on a new project that did not have dedicated funding, but HOPE has continued to grow and has several leaders who are now also leaders in Housing Justice for All.

## **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.**

Much of my political organizing over the last decade has been through NYC-DSA, an organization focused primarily on reducing corporate influence in politics, and increasing the accountability of politicians and police to working people. I volunteered for the campaigns to elect Julia Salazar, Phara Souffrant Forrest, Jabari Brisport, and Zohran Mamdani to the State legislature, in order to put them in a position to curb corporate influence in politics and help pass New York's nation-leading public matching funds program, which reduces the influence of corporate money in elections and helps everyday people power campaigns. I also volunteered for the successful campaign to pass the Build Public Renewables act, a bill that breaks up the corporate monopoly on renewable energy and creates new public oversight over our energy system. DSA and the Public Power NY coalition also introduced and passed the subsequent Public Renewables Transparency Act that created more opportunities for public input, oversight, and reporting.

I believe deeply in making government more democratic, transparent, and accountable to working people instead of corporate money, and it's a big part of my motivation for deciding to run and serve in Albany.

# 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?**

No

## Comments (optional)

No - I believe that protecting parties' ability to choose who they nominate for general elections is a crucial part of democracy, and that states which have removed this ability by adopting open primaries have seen less ideological diversity and voter choice as a result, not more.

However, I do support changing New York's party registration laws to allow voters who want to participate in a party primary to register with that party much closer to the election, so that no one is locked out of the primary of the party they wish to participate in. I also support changing the election system to allow for more parties to exist and be represented proportionally in governing coalitions, so that voters who do not feel well represented by the major parties have a real ability to form their own parties with other like-minded voters without spoiling elections – a right provided in nearly every other country in the world.

**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've been disturbed by the efforts in other states to use redistricting to disenfranchise voters, such as Texas' recent proposed gerrymander that would give Black Texans 1/5 the voting power of white Texans. I will fight to protect fair and equitable redistricting processes in New York.

**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

## Comments (optional)

I support giving voters, not just party officials, the power to decide their party's nominee.

**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)

Yes, especially the provisions for professionalization of commissioners and accountability for the executive director.

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

Yes

### Comments (optional)

Yes. Our problem is that it is too difficult to vote, not too easy, and having an expired drivers' license should not mean you lose your right to vote. America's ID system is very fragmented and difficult for people to access, and adding this requirement would function as a poll tax that creates new friction and voter disenfranchisement. Our election system is already very secure.

**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

### Comments (optional)

Yes. Millions of Americans are in jail at any given time, and they deserve political personhood and representation in the political system.

# 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)

Yes. Public matching reduces the influence of corrupt corporate money in elections, and lets everyday working people power campaigns. Every dollar put into this program increases the accountability of our government to the people.

**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

## Comments (optional)

Yes. America's campaign finance system is shockingly open to corporate influence, especially through PACs in the wake of Buckley v. Valeo & Citizens United. I support transparency requirements on PAC contributions and spending, and I support limiting PAC contributions and spending.

**12. Do you support applying lower contribution limits to lobbyists and people doing business with the state or seeking contracts from the state?**

Yes

**New York City imposes lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and individuals doing business with the City.**

## Comments (optional)

Yes. Quantitatively, I don't believe this is a major source of corrupt financial influence in New York, but I believe stricter contribution limits can still have a positive impact.

# 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

## Comments (optional)

Yes. We have seen too many high-profile instances of police misconduct where it's revealed that the offending officer had a history of misconduct the public was not aware of, and I believe that more transparency in misconduct records is essential for increasing police accountability and ending the culture of silence and impunity for officers that abuse their power.

**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

## Comments (optional)

Yes. Police departments should not be investigating themselves for misconduct – independent oversight is necessary for accountability and public trust.

## 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

### Comments (optional)

Yes. Charter revision commissions should reflect the democratic will of voters.

**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

### Comments (optional)

Yes, I believe that it’s important for voters to have the opportunity to learn about and organize around proposed charter revisions, and that Eric Adams’ abuse of the process in 2024 was undemocratic and violated the spirit of the charter revision system.

## ADDITIONAL INFO