



Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee NYS Comptroller Election -
Primary 2026

Name Tom DiNapoli

GENERAL INFORMATION

Age 72

Education Hofstra University (BA), The New School (MA)

Current job, position, or occupation

State Comptroller

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

State Assemblymember, school board member

Campaign Contact Information

Website dinapolifornewyork.com

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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.

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

Protecting the state pension fund. The Fund is one of the strongest large public pension systems in the nation, valued at nearly \$300 billion and well-funded. I set a disciplined 5.9% target rate of return, which reduces the pressure to invest in risky strategies and keeps the Fund meeting its benchmarks. I will continue to manage the Fund with the long-term, diversified approach that has delivered consistent results through multiple market cycles.

Fighting corruption and holding government accountable. I took over an office in crisis and made restoring public trust my first priority. I created an independent inspector general, a special counsel for ethics, and a new Division of Investigations that has produced more than 380 arrests and recovered over \$105 million. I advanced procurement reform to strengthen ethics requirements and conflict-of-interest disclosures. I will continue to root out corruption and hold accountable anyone who misuses public funds.

Making government more effective and efficient. I will continue to work to ensure that agencies responsible for delivering critical services in health care, housing, education, mental health, child welfare,

and more, are doing their jobs. I will fight against any effort to diminish my contract oversight that protects taxpayers, ensures competitive bidding, and holds contractors accountable. I will continue to expand Open Book New York to make government spending transparent and accessible, and return unclaimed funds at record levels. This work is about making sure government delivers for the people it serves, and holding it accountable when it doesn't.

2. 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.

As Comptroller, promoting good government and meaningful reform has been a major priority. Among my first actions, I signed an Executive Order on Ethics and established a special Ethics counsel and independent inspector general to set a new standard of accountability for the office.

I created an Investigations Division to root out public corruption, producing more than 380 arrests and recovering over \$105 million. I advanced fiscal, debt and capital reforms, and procurement reform to impose tougher ethics requirements and strengthen conflict-of-interest disclosure for those in the contracting process. I successfully fought for legislation to restore Comptroller oversight authority after billions of dollars in contracts were exempted from independent review.

I launched Open Book New York to give the public direct access to state and local financial data, and have interactive dashboards covering state and local spending trends, contracts, federal aid, NYC agency services and NYC311 complaints, and more. My audits provide accountability for programs New Yorkers depend on, and I report agency progress implementing audit recommendations.

I fought for campaign finance reform and public financing of campaigns. As Comptroller, I barred certain firms from contributing to Comptroller campaigns and pushed for public financing legislation. I use the pension fund's shareholder power to push for corporate political spending disclosure, filing 196 proposals since Citizens United, with 72 companies agreeing to disclose.

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

3. The State Comptroller is tasked with reviewing government contracts and addressing potential cases of waste, fraud, or corruption. Please describe your approach to reviewing contracts, and what areas in State Government procurement you believe most need attention to such issues?

Our contract oversight role is one of the strongest safeguards protecting taxpayer dollars in state government. We examine whether costs are reasonable, terms are favorable to taxpayers, and that bidders get a fair shot. This promotes transparency, ensures effective competition, and catches problems before money is spent. We then review payments, audits, agency controls, and investigate allegations of corruption or misuse. Our approach – review, monitor, audit, investigate – makes the Comptroller's oversight effective. We also monitor and report annually on agencies' compliance with prompt payment and prompt contracting laws.

The areas in particular need of attention are contracts exempted from Comptroller oversight. My FY 2027 Executive Budget report identified the \$4 billion proposed to be exempted, on top of billions exempted in prior years, as a significant financial risk since no one outside the administration would be checking whether taxpayers are getting a fair deal. I vigorously oppose these carve outs and have been fighting to remove them.

Public authority procurements are another concern, as they are largely excluded from independent oversight. I report on these procurements on Open Book New York in detail and via the State Public Authorities dashboard, but that is not a substitute for pre-approval. My economic development audits regularly find problems, including an inability to justify corporate tax breaks, failure to hold businesses accountable for promised job creation, reporting compliance deficiencies, and a lack of tangible results for significant spending. If these programs are not delivering, there should be mechanisms to recoup those funds.

4. The Governor has attempted to curtail the comptroller pre-audit authority by removing the types of contracts (depending on size and type) that would trigger a review. Governor Cuomo enacted similar measures. How would you ensure contract auditing power is permanent? How will you fight ongoing attempts to curtail the OSC power over contracts?

Eroding the Comptroller's contract oversight is a significant financial risk to the state. I successfully fought for legislation to restore contract oversight that had been eliminated, with tremendous assistance from a powerful contingent of good government groups including Citizens Union. As noted in their support memo, the Buffalo Billion bid-rigging scandal occurred not long after the state removed Comptroller pre-audit authority, a stark example of what happens when these protections are stripped away.

Absent a Constitutional amendment, this pre-audit authority is at risk of being carved out through statutory changes. This oversight exists to protect the public interest and ensure a level procurement playing field for bidders, and shouldn't be on the negotiating table. My annual State Budget reports identify and quantify procurements proposed to bypass critical oversight and competitive processes, and I press the Legislature to reject them.

I will continue making the case for why pre-audit authority matters. I report annually on our process and progress, with 90% of contracts reviewed within 15 days and the average contract taking less than 8 days. I will continue to vigorously fight against every attempt to bypass the taxpayer protections our oversight provides. Ongoing support from organizations like Citizens Union, who independently validate the importance of this review, is essential to ensuring the protections we fought to restore are not eroded.

5. What would be your auditing priorities? What agencies, authorities, and local governments would you audit first?

My audit priorities focus on ensuring transparency and accountability, and ensuring government funds are used efficiently and effectively. Our annual report and six-year listing shows where our state audit efforts have focused.

We use a risk assessment process to determine what agencies and localities to audit. Factors that increase risk include receiving funding through mechanisms that limit scrutiny, such as lump-sum appropriations or funding excluded from the Comptroller's pre-audit authority. We also assess prior history, including failures to implement corrective actions from audit recommendations. Areas of significant spending are a focus, such as Medicaid, where we have identified billions of dollars in savings so the Department of Health can reduce waste and better maximize these critical health care dollars. The MTA is another key area, as well as housing program audits, which have revealed systemic oversight failures that threaten thousands of affordable housing units.

Our state and local audits, which are all publicly available, also focus on programs that serve vulnerable populations, such as special education, mental health training and services, and lead testing, services for people with disabilities, programs for older adults, supportive housing, and language access services. When these programs fall short, the people who depend on them most bear the greatest cost.

A recurring finding across audits is the failure of agencies like Empire State Development to produce timely, accurate, and complete data. Without reliable reporting, transparency and accountability break down, and the public has no way to judge whether programs are delivering results.

6. 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, and has enacted a Doing Business Database to track such individuals.

Yes. Lower contribution limits, stronger disclosure requirements, and a transparent tracking system would help break the pay-to-play cycle that erodes public trust in government spending and procurement.

I have long advocated for stronger guardrails around the intersection of campaign contributions and government contracting. I advanced legislation sponsored by Senator Myrie that would prohibit vendors from making contributions to statewide elected officials or candidates during an active procurement and require any such contributions to be returned. I have pledged not to accept donations from anyone involved in legal Requests for Proposals with the state pension fund.

***In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve ethics and accountability in New York State government.**

I strive to make the Comptroller's Office a model agency in regard to ethics and accountability. When I first became Comptroller, my top priority was restoring the public's trust in the Office. I am also fully committed to adhering to the reforms I put in place to improve the operations of the pension fund. In April 2009, I banned placement agents, paid intermediaries and registered lobbyists from involvement with investment decisions, making New York one of the first states in the nation to completely ban them. I fought to have this ban codified into law to protect the Fund well into the future, which was accomplished in 2018.

From an accountability standpoint, making government spending transparent and accessible to everyday New Yorkers has been a priority since my first day as Comptroller. I launched Open Book New York, which provides access to state and local financial records in an interactive, downloadable way. We are in the process of expanding the platform to make it even more user-friendly and informative. I've also launched several interactive tracking tools and dashboards covering state and local spending; federal aid impacts; NYC agency services; NYC311 complaints by neighborhood; and state contracts. All are publicly accessible and regularly updated, and we are always looking for opportunities and suggestions for where else we can bring useful data and information to the public. I want every New Yorker to be able to see where their tax dollars are going, to give them the tools they need to hold their government accountable.

My audits regularly expose where agencies are falling short in serving the public, and all are available on our website, searchable by agency. When we see consistent patterns of problems, or systemic issues, we will roll up several audits into a broader report, and call for comprehensive reforms. Although we cannot enforce compliance with our audit recommendations, agencies are required to report to us a 180-day response identifying the corrective actions they've taken, and we do follow-up audits that assess agency performance and the extent to which recommendations have been implemented. I launched an online tracker to monitor this progress and publicly report it.

In addition, all our local audits, state and local budget and policy reports, and state, New York City, and local government financial and other informational resources are available in easily searchable databases on our website. We continue to look for opportunities to facilitate access to our work.

BUDGET AND FISCAL HEALTH

7. Funding threats from the federal government and unclear economic prospects could have a dramatic effect on New York. How would you utilize the authority of the Comptroller's Office to ensure the fiscal health of our State?

The damage policies coming out of Washington can inflict on New York State and its local governments cannot be overstated. Both face significant uncertainty from economic instability and a fractured federal-state relationship. My state and city budget reports, and local financial reporting, monitor these changes and quantify the potential damage wherever possible. I have consistently called on the state and the City to build reserves and close their structural budget gaps before conditions worsen further.

I launched an online resource to identify the scope of harm federal cuts could have on essential services, including Medicaid and other health programs, education, higher education, safety net programs like SNAP,

and more. This tracker gives policymakers, advocates, and the public real-time data on what is at stake. My reports show how federal actions will worsen food insecurity, jeopardize clean energy investments, farms and food production, higher education, the MTA, and much more. I have assessed the damage tariffs inflict on the state and New York City, and how they are driving higher costs for consumers and businesses. I stood with fiscal officers from across the nation to demand an end to abusive immigration enforcement actions that are threatening the very communities this nation was built on.

I will continue to expose and fight back against the harmful actions coming out of Washington. Through transparency, sound fiscal management, and continuous oversight, I will safeguard the essential services that millions of New Yorkers rely on.

8. Do you believe that the current balance of power between the governor and the legislature in the budget process is appropriate? What steps do you believe are necessary, if any, to change this balance?

The balance of power in the budget process is tilted toward the Executive. Extraordinary powers are routinely built into budget language, including appropriation interchange authority, the ability to reallocate spending to other agencies or public authorities, and the elimination of competitive processes and Comptroller oversight, giving the Executive unilateral ability to reshape the budget after enactment. These provisions bypass long-standing checks and balances and have no place in a budget that is transparent and accountable to the public.

The Legislature also has tools it has not fully used. The budget deliberation period should give the public and interested parties a meaningful opportunity to understand proposals and their impact, and the conference committee process could do far more to provide public disclosure of budget negotiations. Instead, budget bills are passed with minimal disclosure of changes from the Executive proposal and their overall fiscal impact. My fiscal reforms would help address these problems.

My independent analyses give the Legislature and the public objective reviews of the Executive and Enacted budgets. A healthy democracy requires genuine checks and balances, and I am committed to ensuring the Comptroller's independent perspective remains one of those critical checks.

*** In the box below, you may provide any additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve the fiscal health and budget in New York State government.**

Given the current climate in Washington and these uncertain times, I believe every effort must be made to ensure a sustainable financial future for all New Yorkers.

In response to actions to diminish Comptroller oversight of billions of dollars in procurements, as previously noted, I successfully fought to restore my oversight, bringing back critical taxpayer protections to a significant amount of state spending. I am pushing for additional procurement reforms, including a bill that would prohibit vendors from making contributions to statewide elected officials or candidates during an active procurement and require any such contributions to be returned, and a bill to require a public listing of certain emergency and exempted contracts, which would otherwise be subject to the approval of the State Comptroller. Enactment of these bills would strengthen accountability and transparency, and reduce the risk of waste fraud and abuse in state procurement.

I have fought for the state to build its reserves to be better prepared for the next downturn or emergency, and to stave off the damage being inflicted from Washington. I reiterate this call in my regular reporting on the budget and financial plan updates. I also believe we need to get better control of State debt, and advance a debt reform framework that would establish safeguards to prevent the circumventing of controls, as I reported occurred with the state's debt caps. My proposal calls for eliminating the state's excessive reliance on backdoor borrowing and restoring voter control over the state's debt.

My reports have also identified substantial infrastructure challenges at the State and local levels, including State and local roads, bridges and water systems, as well as the need for investments in building resiliency. I advanced recommendations for capital planning reforms which called for a comprehensive assessment of our capital needs, and put in place mechanisms to ensure we do a better job prioritizing our capital spending.

In prior years, I advanced comprehensive fiscal reforms to open up the budget process and bring public authority spending on budget, eliminate discretionary lump sum appropriations, make the state budget more understandable and transparent, boost the state's rainy day reserve funds to better prepare for economic downturns and disasters, promote more responsible debt practices, and create a comprehensive capital planning process. Although these reforms have not been enacted, I still believe such measures would greatly strengthen the state's fiscal health and markedly improve government accountability.

I will continue my fight against public corruption, and through audits, will identify inefficiencies and help agencies develop better controls to make sure taxpayers are getting their money's worth. Since becoming Comptroller, I have identified billions of dollars in cost savings, waste, and misuse of taxpayer dollars. I will continue to use this Office to fight waste, fraud, and abuse at the state and local level.

I am proud to be known for my integrity and independence, and I am committed to making government more accountable and transparent for the people. There is much more work to do, and I will continue to fight to get it done.

PENSION FUNDS

9. Comptrollers implement various strategies for responsible investing, from divestment to shareholder advocacy and targeted investments. How do you, or how would you, propose to balance maximizing investment returns with broader social responsibility goals?

As Trustee of the Fund, I am bound by fiduciary duty to manage the Fund in the best interest of its 1.2 million members, retirees and beneficiaries. Every investment decision must start from that obligation. However, fiduciary duty and social responsibility are not in conflict. Companies that manage environmental, social, and governance risks are better long-term investments, and that is good for the Fund. This is the principle behind our approach: doing well by doing good.

Our Sustainable Investment and Climate Solutions program has committed more than \$28 billion toward a goal of \$40 billion by 2035, investing in climate solutions and clean energy that deliver competitive, risk-adjusted returns. We are a leading institutional investor in affordable and workforce housing, with billions of dollars invested in New York and beyond through partnership with the Community Preservation Corporation and other investment strategies. Our Emerging Managers program has committed \$11.6 billion to providing opportunities to diverse and smaller investment firms that consistently deliver strong results.

Our corporate governance program is one of the most active in the nation, filing hundreds of shareholder proposals on political spending disclosure, board diversity, climate risk, disability inclusion, and workers' rights; securing dozens of agreements; and driving meaningful changes in corporate behavior. When companies fail to respond, I hold their boards accountable through proxy voting.

The result is a Fund that delivers strong returns for its members while using its voice as a large institutional investor to demand better from portfolio companies and promote sustainable investments.

10. The OSC manages nearly \$300 billion in pension funds. How do you, or would you, ensure the highest levels of ethical conduct and transparency in the management of the funds?

During my tenure, the Fund has established itself as one of the nation's top public pension funds in performance, transparency, and ethics. In January 2026, an independent review concluded that the Fund operates at the highest ethical standards, is in full compliance with fiduciary and statutory requirements, and acts solely for the benefit of its members. This review, required by state regulations, was part of the reforms I fought for upon becoming Comptroller, to deliver a transparent, independent evaluation of the Fund's management and identify areas for improvement. Prior reports (2022, 2019, 2016, 2013) have consistently reached similar conclusions, and I continually look for opportunities to build on what we have achieved.

Among the reforms I have instituted: a ban on placement agents to eliminate the potential for abuse; a comprehensive Code of Conduct outlining standards for employees, managers, consultants, and advisory committees; and a ban on pay-to-play practices by prohibiting the Fund from doing business with any

investment adviser who made a political contribution to the Comptroller or a candidate for Comptroller within the prior two years.

More than 1.2 million workers, retirees and beneficiaries count on this Fund, and deserve a Comptroller who manages it with integrity, transparency, and independence. That is exactly what I have done and will continue to do.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.



TPD Bio (1).pdf

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I am the best candidate for Comptroller because no one else in this race has the experience, the record, or the proven independence to do this job at the level New Yorkers deserve.

I built this office into one of the most effective and trusted institutions in state government. I assumed an office in crisis and restored its integrity. I grew the pension fund to nearly \$300 billion, one of the best-funded, best-managed in the country. I held government accountable through hundreds of audits that identify where programs and services could be provided more efficiently and effectively, fought public corruption, and used the power of the pension fund to push corporations to address environmental, social, and governance risks.

But experience alone isn't enough. What sets me apart is that I have consistently used this office to fight for people who need government to work and who depend on programs that are now under threat from Washington: children and families facing poverty, food insecurity, and homelessness; immigrants; older adults; people with disabilities; and more.

This is not the time to hand this office to someone who doesn't understand the job. My opponents make sweeping promises about things the Comptroller simply cannot do. That's performative politics, not leadership. I have used the actual powers of this office to deliver real results.

I built my public service career on a foundation of honesty and integrity, achieving results through open dialogue, transparency, and partnerships all across New York, and look forward to continuing this work.