



# Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee NYS Legislative Election - Primary 2026

**Name** Vanessa Aronson

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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

**District Number** 73

**In which primary** Democratic

**Age** 41

**Education** B.A., University of Chicago Master in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

**Current job, position, or occupation**  
not employed

### Other positions or roles

City Council Candidate, District 4, 2025  
ASPCA, Senior Director of Strategy, 2018-2025  
Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College 2018  
City Council Candidate, District 4, 2017  
New York City Public School Teacher, Math and Science, MS319, 2014-2017  
U.S. Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State, 2009-2014  
Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow 2005-2009

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

President, Lexington Democratic Club, 2023-2024  
Vice President, Lexington Democratic Club, 2021-2023  
Executive Committee Member-At-Large, Lexington Democratic Club, 2016-2021  
Chair, Youth Education and Libraries Committee and Chair, Technology Committee, Manhattan Community Board 8, 2019-2023  
Chair, Tikkun Olam Committee, Park Avenue Synagogue, 2017-2019

## Campaign Contact Information

**Website** [vanessafor.ny.com](http://vanessafor.ny.com)

**Twitter** @vanessaaronson (not used much)

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/vanessataronson](http://www.facebook.com/vanessataronson)

**Instagram** @vanessataronson

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: We are in a housing affordability crisis. I will support efforts to allow the State to directly and efficiently invest in affordable housing on a larger scale, advocate to protect the current stock of affordable housing through a relief fund and more stringent evaluation of redevelopment proposals, and advocate to redefine eligibility with statistical and evidence-based measures of affordability.

2: As a former public school teacher and current public school parent, I have the context to understand the complex issues facing schools and the commitment to deliver results for families and our city. My priorities are ensuring school entrances have well-functioning security cameras to keep students safe, implementing data-driven programs to combat bullying, safeguarding funding for free school lunch, and protecting students from ICE raids. I am committed to fully funding CUNY, a public university system providing top-tier education for all. At a time when our federal government is actively against public education, I commit to supporting stronger local protections for public education and standing up against threats to public school resources.

3: Elected officials are public servants. My priorities include listening to the needs of constituents, representing those interests in the State Assembly, and restoring trust in government through ethics reform. I will support Assembly-level ethics reforms that strengthen oversight and accountability within the State government. Ensuring that ethics enforcement is independent and credible is vital to rebuilding public trust and maintaining a government that is accountable to the people it serves.

### **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?**

In my community, I'm a leader and mobilizer in Democratic politics and activism. I ran for the District 4 City Council seat in 2025 and came in a close second place out of six candidates in a highly competitive race. I was appointed to Manhattan Community Board 8 by Council Member Keith Powers in 2019 and served until 2023. In this capacity, I co-chaired the Youth, Education, & Libraries committee and the Technology committee and was a member of the Land Use committee, Women & Families committee, and Communications Committee. Under my committee leadership, CB8 addressed the below critical issues: literacy, class size caps, mental health and school counselors, 3K/PreK admissions and programs, the ongoing fight against library budget cuts, school accessibility, early childhood education, school safety, and the NYC Early Intervention Program.

I am a New York County Judicial Delegate and Democratic Committee member, avidly recruiting to integrate more community members into these foundational roles in the political process. As President of my Democratic club from 2022 through 2024, I personally cultivated, welcomed, and stewarded many of our new members. Many of these local activists volunteered for my City Council campaign and will continue on with my State Assembly campaign.

Through all of the work in our community described above, I've built a strong coalition of local supporters and volunteers.

**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 am currently one of five elected members of the New York County Committee Ethics Committee. The committee was formed in response to an ethics complaint filed in April 2024 on behalf of 23 members of the Manhattan County Committee regarding an incident at the 2023 County Committee Organizing Meeting in October 2023. The committee itself has been marred with conflicts of interest and suffered numerous resignations over the past year. The current chair mismanaged the investigation process and drafted a report with findings that I could not, in good conscience, support. Alongside another committee member, we drafted and submitted a minority report to the county executive committee.

I served as a member of my City Council Member's Participatory Budgeting committee for three cycles. I have also rallied and testified at the City Council for consumer protections and transparency. I also authored an op-ed about the City's Matching Funds program that was published in City and State in December 2024.

# 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

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

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

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

**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)

Independent Expenditure entities can too easily manipulate messaging behind unchecked expenditure limits and accountability. Voters deserve to know what special interests are promoting messages about candidates and ballot measures.

**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

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



Vanessa Aronson AD73 Walk Card.pdf

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

I have spent my career advocating for our community’s most pressing issues, from affordability and safety to public education, accessibility, and grassroots public engagement.

Most recently, I served as the Senior Director of Strategy at the ASPCA, where I worked to protect animals and strengthen our communities. I previously ran for City Council, placing in a close second place and am thrilled to be stepping up once again to serve our community.

Before entering politics, I was a NYC public school teacher, deeply committed to students, families, and our community. Prior to that, I spent a decade as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer, representing our country on the global stage. While at the UN, I negotiated multi-million dollar agreements that provided food assistance to 795 million people—a testament to my ability to deliver real results. Throughout my career, I have fearlessly lived my values and promoted democracy, safety and security.

A former member of two unions - the UFT and AFSA - I know the critical role unions and union members play in keeping our City strong and our economy fair. As a member of the State Assembly, I will be a steadfast voice for labor and working people.

I am a tireless, tested and trusted champion for the East Side and an experienced organizer and mobilizer in NYC Democratic politics. As the former President of the Lexington Democratic Club, I grew membership by 400% and continue to recruit and empower new East Side voices in the political process and defend our values. Additionally, I serve as a New York County Judicial Delegate and Democratic Committee member, roles that ensure our judiciary and local politics reflect community needs.

My commitment to service extends beyond politics—I’m also a former Community Board 8 member and previously co-chaired the Tikkun Olam ("social justice") Committee at Park Avenue Synagogue, where I worked to support our most vulnerable neighbors and ensure the community’s voice would be heard. My academic credentials include degrees from University of Chicago and Harvard. I live on the Upper East Side with my husband, Reid, and our two children.