2026 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York State Legislature

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Name	**William Smith**
District	68th Assembly District
In which primary	Democratic Primary
Age	39
Education	High School Diploma, Humanities-A. Philip Randolph Campus High School at City College Bachelor of Arts, Political Science & Government, Minor: Economics-CUNY City College Certificate, Accounting & Bookkeeping-CUNY City College Candidate, Master of Science Finance-University of Texas Permian Basin (1/2026-Present)
Current job, position, or occupation	Democratic District Leader, 68th District, Executive Part D (Elected June 2021) Principal Consultant-Lakeside Group, LLC
Other positions or roles	Executive Board Member, NAACP New York Branch (September 2025-Present) Member, Judiciary Committee-New York County Democratic Committee (February 2022-Present) Advisory Board Member, IssueVoter (May 2021-Present) Delegate to Judicial Convention, First Judicial District (2022/2023/2025)
Previous jobs or positions	**Professional** Wealth Analyst, Licensed Insurance Agent (Northwestern Mutual Insurance Company) Associate Investment Consultant, Not-For Profit (Mercer Investments) Manager, MWDBE Contract Compliance (MTA Department of Diversity & Civil Rights) Political Organizer (Transport Workers Union, AFL-CIO Local 100) Policy Analyst-Office of Housing Committee Chairman (New York State Assembly, 70th District) Business Analyst-Chief Administrative Office-Investment Banking Division (Credit Suisse) **Board Service** Council of Community Advisory Boards-NYC Health & Hospitals Vice Chair (September 2022-August 2024) Community Advisory Board-Metropolitan Hospital-NYC Health & Hospitals Chairman (September 2021-August 2024) Vice Chair (September 2019-August 2021) Board Member (September 2017-August 2019) Public Member, Housing Committee-Manhattan Community Board Eleven (2/2014-3/2016)
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CITIZENS UNION
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General

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

Strengthen public safety and quality of life, expand affordable housing/preserve public housing, enhance tenant protections, and grow small business and career training/job opportunities. I will work with local stakeholders, advocate for targeted investments, and advance policies that support working families.

- 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 was born in Harlem and I'm a lifelong resident of East Harlem. I have long been engaged in community initiatives, civic discussions, and public forums. I'm proud to work with residents and organizations focused on strengthening opportunity and quality of life. I'm proud of helping bring resources to the community through job & resource fairs, leadership trainings, build grassroots civic engagement in East Harlem—bringing residents together for community discussions, policy conversations, and local organizing that encourages people to participate in the democratic process.

- 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.

My work emphasizes transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership. In August 2021, co-sponsored a virtual forum with several Manhattan Democratic clubs focused on reforming the Board of Elections, bringing together stakeholders to confront long-standing issues around transparency and governance. I support fair elections, responsible campaign finance rules, and stronger oversight so government works for residents rather than insiders.

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?

Primary elections ensure party members choose their nominee, and as a Democratic District Leader, I believe that process matters. At the same time, many New Yorkers—especially in New York City—are unaffiliated and want a greater voice. Expanding participation starts with stronger civic education. We need a comprehensive immersive civic curriculum with consistency across schools and public colleges, so people understand how to register, vote, how government works, how the state budget impacts their communities, and how to advocate for change—while addressing language barriers so no one is excluded. I support maintaining party primaries while remaining open to reforms that expand participation without undermining their purpose.

- 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. I support maintaining constitutional protections that prevent gerrymandering and protect minority voting rights and fair representation.

- 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?

  I fully support the implementation of a nonpartisan special elections.

- 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. We must ensure that the Board of Elections in the City of York becomes more independent & professional, transparent, and accountable so elections are administered efficiently and fairly.

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

  I oppose policies that could create barriers to voting. Our focus should be on expanding access and participation.

- 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. If emergencies disrupt voting, polling hours should be extended to ensure every voter has the opportunity to cast a ballot.

- 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. Given the importance of civic education and helping our citizens, being in a corrections facility should not block participation in the electoral process. I support the Democracy During Detention Act (S440/A2121), which ensures eligible voters in jail can access ballots securely and consistently, making our democracy work for everyone.

Campaign Finance

- Are you a public campaign finance participant? If not, please explain why.
  Yes. I participate because public financing allows grassroots candidates to compete and reduces the influence of large donors.

- 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. I strongly support the state's public campaign matching funds program and believe it should be fully funded. Adequate funding ensures candidates can rely on grassroots support and that the program achieves its intended goals of fair and transparent elections.

- Do you support requiring disclosure of a contributor's employer in campaign finance reports? (S1910 Rivera/A3092 Carroll)
  Yes. Clear campaign finance reporting lets voters see who backs candidates and reinforces the integrity of the entire election system.

- 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. Voters deserve to know who is funding political media to influence elections.

- 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, I fully support the application of stricter contribution limits. Lower contribution limits for lobbyists and individuals doing business with the state can help prevent conflicts of interest.

Ethics

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

  Yes. Transparency around fundraising, lobbying, and consulting activities is essential for maintaining public trust. We must ensure the integrity of our electoral process and campaign finance laws are upheld.

- 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. Lobbying activity connected to nominations should be disclosed so the public understands who is influencing confirmation processes.

- Do you support codifying sexual harassment as conduct that violates the public officers and employees code of ethics? (Gounardes S4197/Kelles A6201).
  Yes, I fully support codifying sexual harassment.

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, I support giving City of New York CCRB access to records.

- Do you support transferring disciplinary hearings involving police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)? (S3927 Myrie)

  Yes, I fully support transferring the disciplinary hearings as we must ensure any alleged NYPD police officers

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, charter revision commissions should not be rushed or politically timed.

- 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, charter revision processes should be deliberate and transparent, allowing meaningful public participation.