2026 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York State Legislature

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

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	Yuh-Line Niou
District	Senate District 27
In which primary	Democratic
Age	42
Education	BA, MPA
Current job, position, or occupation	Independent Consultant
Other positions or roles	
Previous jobs or positions	Former State Assemblymember
Contact information	
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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?**
  My three core priorities are housing affordability, economic justice, and protecting immigrant New Yorkers. On housing, I will champion the Social Housing Development Authority, strengthen and expand rent stabilization, pass the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, and establish a statewide Right to Counsel for tenants facing eviction. I helped draft and vote for the historic 2019 tenant protections and will build on that work in the Senate. On economic justice, I will fight to raise taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers and most profitable corporations to fund universal childcare, healthcare through the New York Health Act, and fully funded public schools. I was the prime sponsor of the Stock Buyback Transfer Tax and one of the first cosponsors of the full Invest in Our New York package.On immigrant protection, I will champion the New York for All Act, the Language Access Expansion Act, the Access to Representation Act, and the BUILD Act. ICE has no place in our communities, and I will use every tool available in the Senate to protect our neighbors.

- **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 have lived in this district for over a decade. I represented the 65th Assembly District, which has 100% overlap with SD-27, for three terms. I am particularly proud of helping draft and vote for the landmark tenant protections of 2019. I went on a hunger strike alongside taxi workers drowning in medallion debt. I passed language access legislation for immigrant communities. I shared my own story on the Assembly floor to help pass the Child Victims Act — members on both sides told me my speech changed their vote. I also held Andrew Cuomo accountable when it was not politically convenient to do so.

- **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 a deep record on good government reform. I voted for historic bail reform, discovery reform, and Raise the Age. I worked on and voted for New York's small donor public campaign finance matching system in 2020 and am a participant in the program this year. I was an early, vocal voice calling for Cuomo's resignation when most elected officials were still silent. I have championed campaign finance transparency, ethics reform, and anti-corruption legislation throughout my Assembly tenure. I believe an unbought and unbossed legislature is the foundation of everything else we are trying to build.

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. Locking over a million voters out of the primary process undermines democratic participation and disenfranchises communities that are already underrepresented. Opening our primaries is a commonsense reform that strengthens our democracy.

- **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. Protections against gerrymandering, minority voting rights, population equity, and consideration of communities of interest are essential safeguards. I will oppose any effort to strip or weaken them.

- **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. Party officials should not have unilateral power to fill vacant legislative seats. Nonpartisan special elections, like New York City's system, are more democratic, transparent, and accountable to voters.

- **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. The Board of Elections has long been a patronage-driven institution that fails voters. Meaningful reform that professionalizes its operations and reduces partisan control is long overdue.

- **Do you oppose requiring registered voters to show ID to vote in New York State?**
  Yes. Voter ID requirements disproportionately disenfranchise low-income, elderly, immigrant, and voters of color and these communities are already underserved by our political system. They are a solution in search of a problem and function as a barrier to 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. No voter should be turned away because of an emergency beyond their control. Extending polling hours in disrupted locations is a simple and necessary protection.

- **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. Every eligible voter deserves ballot access, including those detained in jails who have not been convicted or remain otherwise eligible. We should be expanding the franchise, not narrowing it based on incarceration status.

Campaign Finance

- **Are you a public campaign finance participant? If not, please explain why.**
  Yes. I worked on and voted for the small donor matching funds program in 2020 and am a proud participant in this race. I have already met the threshold and anticipate maximizing matching funds. The majority of my donors are small-dollar contributors, reflecting the people-powered campaign I run.

- **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.
  Yes, without reservation. A fully funded matching program is essential to reducing the influence of large donors and special interests. I will fight to ensure the program is robustly funded every budget cycle.

- **Do you support requiring disclosure of a contributor's employer in campaign finance reports? (S1910 Rivera/A3092 Carroll)**
  Yes. Voters deserve to know who is funding campaigns and what interests those donors represent. Employer disclosure is a basic transparency measure.

- **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. Dark money undermines democratic accountability. Requiring disclosure of top donors on advertisements is a commonsense reform that New York City has already proven works.

- **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. New York City's model of lower limits for registered lobbyists and those doing business with the city should be extended statewide. Those seeking government contracts or influence should not leverage outsized contributions to elected officials.

Ethics

- **Do you support requiring lobbyists to report their campaign contributions and fundraising activity, as well as campaign consulting services they provide?**
  Yes. Lobbyists wield significant influence in Albany. Full disclosure of their campaign activity contributions, bundling, and consulting is essential to transparency and accountability.

- **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 around executive appointments is ripe for undisclosed influence. The public has a right to know when lobbyists are working to shape who holds key government positions.

- **Do you support codifying sexual harassment as conduct that violates the public officers and employees code of ethics? (Gounardes S4197/Kelles A6201)**
  Yes. As a survivor of abuse myself, I have fought throughout my career to make government workplaces safe and accountable. Codifying sexual harassment as an ethics violation is essential. I also support banning no-rehire clauses in harassment settlements and preventing taxpayer funds from covering personal legal fees for public officials.

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. The CCRB cannot do its job without access to relevant records. Meaningful civilian oversight requires transparency, not stonewalling.

- **Do you support transferring disciplinary hearings involving police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)? (S3927 Myrie)**
  Yes. The NYPD should not adjudicate its own disciplinary cases. Independent adjudication through OATH is essential to a fair and credible accountability system. I also support ending qualified immunity, which shields public officials who violate civil rights from accountability.

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. Last-minute charter revision commissions are frequently used to entrench outgoing priorities without adequate democratic input. Banning them protects the integrity of the charter revision process.

- **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. Meaningful charter reform requires time for public hearings, community input, legal review, and genuine deliberation. A mandatory 180-day minimum is a reasonable baseline to prevent rushed, opaque processes that bypass the communities most affected.