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Name	Jason Salmon Salmon
Office Sought (New York State)	Senate
District Number	25
Email	salmon@salmon4ny.com
Party Affiliation(s)	Democrat
Age	34
Education	Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford
Occupation/Employer	Community Organizer
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement	I am a life-long resident of the 25th District 25 which I seek to represent in the NYS Senate. I am a progressive Democrat whose family history in the district dates back 70 years. My ancestors, Black, White, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, immigrated to the U.S., as have so many, in search of economic opportunities and for some to escape religious and political persecution. I am acutely aware of the sacrifices both my distant and near ancestors made to reach the United States and I am dedicated to ensuring this country remains a haven for those in need. From an early age I was inspired by music, I am a classically trained violinist and after graduating college I turned my love for music into a career becoming the owner of a recording studio. I worked with many talented, Brooklyn-based artists. However, in the summer of 2014, my life changed dramatically. While we all watched the death of Eric Garner with anger and frustration, one of my childhood friends was killed by the police. He was a gentle and kind human being who joined the Air Force after high school. He served for eight years, only to return home to lose his life at the hands of the police. These tragedies drove me to become a community organizer and activist. I volunteered for Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), serving as their liaison to Communities United for Police Reform. As an activist and community organizer I assisted to organize support for legislation that strengthened transparency and accountability for law enforcement including the Right to Know Act and the Police STAT Act. I am also a co-founder of JFREJ's "Jews of Color" caucus. I went on to work for Senator Velmanette Montgomery (25thDistrict) as a Community Liaison where for nearly three years I was on the front lines serving the communities of the 25th District. From fighting for affordable housing, to criminal justice reforms, to forming partnerships between city and state agencies and the community, I helped craft practical solutions to the district's everyday problems. I have been on the front lines fighting for affordable housing and tenant rights and have been a vocal opponent of socially irresponsible developments that put profits over our community. I have organized tenants to demand repairs to their apartments, written legislation that promotes civics education in our schools, and have fielded thousands of constituents cases across the 25th Senate District. Today, I am running on a platform centered around ending mass incarceration, addressing the affordable housing crisis, fighting for equity in our education system and ending the rampant social and economic chasm plaguing our society. My

professional experience as both a community organizer and staffer for Senator Montgomery has provided me with a dual lens and experience- understanding the community I seek to represent along with the knowledge how bills get passed in Albany. Both provide me with the foundation to be an effective legislator and advocate for everyday New Yorkers in Albany.

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If elected, which legislative conference will you join (e.g., Republican, Democrat, other)?

Democrat

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?

Yes

Signature



1. Replace the Joint Commission on Public Ethics and the Legislative Ethics Commission with an effective and independent enforcement body (S594A/A1282A).

Support

2. Limit outside compensation earned by state legislators and statewide officials to 25% of their salaries and eliminate stipends.

Support

3. Do you support or oppose the following changes to the state's	a. No-excuse absentee voting (second passage of constitutional amendment)	Support
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current registration and voting system?

b. Election Day voter registration (second passage of constitutional amendment)

Support

c. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief

Support

d. Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out

Support

e. Mandating poll sites on college campuses

Support

4. Reform the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative seats and eliminate delays in filling vacancies.

Support

5. Reduce the vote threshold to become a registered party back to 50,000 votes and keep the gubernatorial election as the qualifying election, and reduce the petition requirement for independent candidates back to 15,000 signatures.

Support

6. Amend the state's public campaign financing system, approved in the 2021 budget, by

a. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits

Support

b. Set even lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state

Support

c. Move the campaign finance matching program to be administered by an independent, nonpartisan body outside of the NY Board of Election

Support

d. Simplify the matching system by making both in- and out-of-district donations eligible and by eliminating the three different tiers for matching

Support

7. Require full disclosure of grants and contracts issued by the state, including the budget lines from which the spending is made and reporting on the results of each grant or contract over a certain amount.

Support

8. Provide for effective online disclosure and itemization of spending from elected officials' lump sum appropriations, including reporting on potential conflicts of interest and how the funds are spent.

Support

9. Repeal Civil Rights Law, Sec. 50-a, which shields from public view the disciplinary records of

Support

police officers, correction officers, and firefighters.

10. Restructure the state Board of Elections to abolish the strict two-party division of governance and operation and put in place professional, nonpartisan administration.

Support

11. Empower the attorney general to investigate and prosecute election law malfeasance and cases of public corruption.

Support

12. Make mayoral control of city schools permanent, with a governance system that provides for accountability, transparency, parent engagement, and democratic participation.

Support

13. Simplify and consolidate New York State's court system by passing the Chief Judge's proposed constitutional amendment to modernize the courts.

Support

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

Criminal Justice Reform: A cornerstone of my platform is tackling mass incarceration in the State of New York. To do this we need police accountability and criminal justice reform, to legalize the adult use of cannabis, as well as create a system that invests in people, meaning ending the use of solitary confinement, and routing funds to communities most disproportionately impacted by generations of discriminatory policing.

Mass incarceration is a punitive system and an extension slavery, and continues our nation's legacy of white supremacy. The names of agencies such as Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) or NYS State Senate Committee Crime Victims, Crime and Correction misleadingly imply that this is a system that values behavioral change. As a community organizer working on the frontlines of this issue, I am conscientious to only use the language "person who is incarcerated" when referring to individuals who are being held in our criminal legal system. I understand the racialized and dehumanizing language that has been used that needs to be retired to encourage rehabilitation and restoration, not punishment.

We need to start thinking about criminal justice reform in a more holistic state wide manner. We have 52 prisons in the State of New York, all of which are in Upstate New York. In order to close those prisons and divest from the prison industrial complex we need to replace those jobs. Upstate New York is filled with underutilized land and an agricultural market that has seen better days. Through legalizing, regulating and taxing the adult use of cannabis we can rebuild communities that have been ravaged by the "War on Drugs," stimulate New York State's economy and transition the prison industries workforce into a burgeoning industry. Yes, we must legalize marijuana, expunge convictions, and use the new funding streams for restorative justice to aid communities most harmed by the disastrous war on drugs.

I've worked on this issue during my tenure in the NYS State Legislature, including organizing and moderating a workshop featuring Montel Williams (talk show host, Cannabis Advocate) sponsored by Senator Montgomery and Assemblymember Crystal People-Stokes during Caucus Weekend in Albany.

Specifically, I would work to repeal 50a of the New York State civil rights law, which prevents the public from accessing records of law enforcement misconduct and

discipline, pass the Police Statistics & Transparency (STAT ACT), which would increase transparency and accountability by making statistical information regarding interactions with police, including arrests and the death of individuals while in the custody of the police available to the public, and passing the special prosecutor bill.

I also support the following reforms: Passage of the Police Statistics & Transparency (STAT) Act [A05472/S1830] which would make statistical information regarding interactions with police, including arrests and the death of individuals while in the custody of the police available to the public; Fair and Timely Parole Act (S497A/A4346A) which ensures that the parole release process is based on who people are today and their accomplishments while incarcerated; and Elder Parole Bill (S2144) which considers parole release for all people aged 55 and older who have served at least 15 consecutive years in prison. I also support the HALT Act, and believe in therapeutic alternatives to solitary confinement and the need for restorative and transformative justice.

The bottom line is, reforming and becoming less dependent on policing involves a lot more than enacting laws — it's about education and implementing community based models to protect our communities.

Campaign Finance Reform: I am not accepting any corporate interest, private real estate, charter school money, or fossil fuel money. We need true campaign finance reform that eliminates corporate interest and private real-estate money from our political process. New York State should pursue a system similar to New York City's system and match at an 8-to-1 ratio to bring greater equality to state elections. Such reform would give candidates an incentive to reach out to their own constituents rather than focusing on wealthy, often, out of district donors.

14. Adopt technological solutions and provisions that will allow the New York State legislature to convene and vote remotely if needed.

Support

15. Provide public access to observe and participate in government proceedings, in meetings that would be public under the New York Open Meetings Law, via live and recorded video available on government websites.

Support

16. Implement immediate programs to facilitate absentee voting for all New York voters as long as the widespread contagion risk of COVID-19 continues, under current state constitutional limitations. This includes electronic submission of absentee ballot applications without a wet signature and a public information campaign.

Support

17. What are your concerns regarding the use of emergency

I think the New York Civil Liberties Union said it best when comparing Governor's new emergency powers passed in early March in response to the Covid-19

powers during this crisis, and how do you think NY government can maintain public accountability standards at this time?

pandemic to the Patriot act passed after 9/11. The NYCLU stated: "We should not repeat the mistakes of 20 years ago. While the legislature should move expeditiously to fund and support the necessary public health response, nothing requires them to expand executive power without adequate consideration for the need or the potential consequences. "

The governor already had broad emergency powers, the expansion of these powers is unnecessary, suspending many good government requirements such as: the anti-bribery statute, the state's revolving door ban and the suspension of the law mandating child care providers undergo criminal background checks.

I think the legislature needs to revisit many of the specifics in this statute. Additionally, it should be revisited, changed where needed and renewed (if necessary) every four months and a non-partisan oversight board should be empaneled.

18. What are the biggest challenges in your district in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak?

Housing, food insecurity, lack of medical care, testing, and Housing, food insecurity, lack of medical care and testing, and social distance enforcement from the NYPD.

I have been trying to meet the challenge by partnering with a local restaurant, Callexico, to deliver food to NYSHA residents in my district.

19. What are the appropriate roles of city, state, and federal governments in a crisis such as this?

The federal government should be coordinating the supply chain, developing, manufacturing and distributing tests and the supplies needed to take the tests such as swabs. It should also be supplying first responders with PPE as well as financially aiding local and state governments to continue providing essential health, education, welfare and safety services.

The role of the states and local governments is to coordinate on the ground efforts to distribute these as well as make policies for the safety of its residents and stopping the spread of the virus based in science and the available data.

All such government policies/actions must insure there is no violation of citizens' constitutional rights and not lend itself to an abuse of power.

20. How will you help your future constituents, residents and businesses, access potential funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, or any other future government relief funds?

I would have a Cares coordinator in my office to assist my constituents navigate and access any and all available relief funds. I would also do an evaluation of what types of funds my constituents most need as well as distribute easy to follow instructions about how to access assistance.

Campaign Promise 1

Criminal Justice Reform

Campaign Promise 2

Affordable Housing

Campaign Promise 3

Education Reform

Campaign Promise 4

Campaign Finance Reform

Campaign Promise 5

Tax Reform (make big corporations, Wall St and real estate developers pay their fair share)

Please tell us how you have and would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an

I have publicly announced that I will not take and have not taken any such contributions, which I believe separates me from other candidates running for this

upright manner, and maintain the public trust.

seat. I've seen firsthand how campaign contributions from corporate interests strongly influence policy and how we collectively legislate as a state. In order for us to create a level playing field for everyday New Yorkers, I will also advocate for true campaign finance reform that will eliminate corporate interest and private real-estate money from our political process. New York State should pursue a system similar to New York City's system and match at a 6-to-1 ratio to bring greater equality to state elections — this gives candidates an incentive to reach out to their own constituents rather than focusing on wealthy, and often out of district, donors. A small donor matching system would bring about more racial and socio-economic diversity in donorship in our political process. At the end of the day true campaign finance reform must eliminate the influence of corporate interest and private real estate money in our political process. Supporting public financing of elections is one major step towards creating a political system that works for the people, not corporations and the real estate industry.

In addition, I learned the power of advocacy groups as s JFREJ's representative in Communities United for Police Reform where I advocated in favor of city and state legislation including the Right to Know Act and the Police Stat Act, to strengthen transparency and accountability for law enforcement. I learned up close the importance of building grassroots power to lead the fight for reform and if elected to the NYS Senate for the 25th District I will continue to partner and work with these types of organizations as well as with local community groups. I would also actively empower community leaders who are not attached to institutional power but who are influential in their own right. An effective elected official understands the job is best done by partnering with the grassroots- with the people. That is how a legislator remains true to their constituents. Since I am not taking any real estate or corporate money I will not be beholden to corporations.