



Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee - NYS Legislative
Election - 2020 General

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Dear candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for office in the New York State Legislature!

In the following pages, you will find questions regarding your positions on various reform measures, campaign promises, and ethics in public office.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York State Legislature, and to issue our endorsement for the General Election.

This is a document confirming your responses to the Citizens Union questionnaire.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues. If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Given time constraints and the limited capacity of a member-based organization, we may not be able to evaluate all contests in this election cycle.

★★

Citizens Union is a nonpartisan democratic reform and good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. We have been evaluating candidates for public office in New York City since 1911, and our comprehensive Voter Directory has been a source of reliable information for New Yorkers for over a century.

You can read Citizens Union's [principles and criteria for our candidate evaluation process here](#).

We thank you very much for your response.

Your Info

Name

Vito J Bruno

Office Sought (New York State)

☒ Senate

District Number

22

Email

info@brunoforny.com

Biographical Information

Party Affiliation(s)

Republican

Age

63

Education

Degree is Architectural Design Pratt Institute

Occupation/Employer

Self Employed Entertainment Company

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Ran for Borough President 2017, Christian Rivera Foundation Board

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name

Von Agency

Campaign Manager Email

info@brunoforny.com

Additional Staff Contact

Phone Number

(917) 582-6218

Address

15 Oliver Street, 6B
Brooklyn, NY, 11209

Website

brunoforny.com

Twitter

@VitoBruno718

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/vito.bruno.5872682>

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

Republican

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

☒ Yes ☐ No

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

Signature

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures. If you wish to elaborate on your answers, you may do so in the provided space at the bottom of this page.

Ethics

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

Elections and Voting

3. Do you support or oppose the following changes to the state's current registration and voting system?

	Support	Oppose
a. No-excuse absentee voting (second passage of constitutional amendment)	-	✓
b. Election Day voter registration (second passage of constitutional amendment)	-	✓
c. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief	-	✓
d. Mandating poll sites on college campuses	-	✓

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

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 ☐ Oppose

Campaign Finance

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

	Support	Oppose
a. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits	-	✓
b. Set even lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state	✓	-
c. Move the campaign finance matching program to be administered by an independent, nonpartisan body outside of the NY Board of Election	✓	-
d. Simplify the matching system by making both in- and out-of-district donations eligible and by eliminating the three different tiers for matching	✓	-

Budget Process

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 ☐ Oppose

Election Administration

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 ☐ Oppose

9. 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 ☐ Oppose

Home Rule

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

11. Local Board of Elections are largely funded by their county. Given the many changes to election administration introduced in New York recently, the state should provide additional funding to county BOEs.

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

Court Reform

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

Redistricting

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

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

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.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Government under the COVID-19 outbreak

14. Maintain the current redistricting process, supported by voters through a 2014 constitutional amendment, and particularly the elements that provide minority parties a voice in the process, allow the Independent Redistricting Commission to play a central role, and takes redistricting power away from the hands of incumbent lawmakers.

☒ Support ☐ Oppose

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 ☐ Oppose

16. The Legislature stopped holding regular meetings soon after the COVID-19 outbreak, and later reconvened in July and August for short sessions that dealt with urgent matters. Should the Legislature return to its regular, pre-COVID calendar next session?

☒ Yes ☐ No

17. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in Albany has been severely curtailed since the Legislature shifted to work remotely. How can the Legislature remain open and accessible for New Yorkers who seek to engage their representatives?

I think that we need to follow the science and also gradually resume operations to full capacity pre-Covid at a faster pace.

Serving the public under the COVID-19 outbreak

18. What are your concerns regarding the use of emergency powers during this crisis, and how do you think NY government can maintain public accountability standards at this time?

While it's understandable that in times of unprecedented health emergencies we must grant emergency powers they must be very narrowly tailored specifically defined with a precise start and end date and limited in scope as much as possible.

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.

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

Protecting seniors has been challenging in our district. Access to testing was a big obstacle as we were one of the last regions to have access to widespread testing. Access to healthcare services in general, and dealing with misinformation.

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

City, State, and Federal Governments must work together at a time like this and must put the political brinkmanship aside for the public good. All facets of crisis should be addressed.

21. 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?

This is an area we must work on and improve greatly on. We need more qualified professionals familiar with the process willing to assist people and businesses in accessing these funds.

CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

What are the top five promises you are making to the voters during the campaign?

Campaign Promise 1

Address Public Safety

Campaign Promise 2

Address the affordability crisis in South Brooklyn affecting lower income working class middle class and even higher income earners.

Campaign Promise 3

Mass Transit is historically horrible in South Brooklyn. We can no longer afford to ignore. Infrastructure in general needs to be upgraded but feedback and buy in from community on designs and upgrades also important.

Campaign Promise 4

Protecting our seniors who are most vulnerable especially during this crisis.

Campaign Promise 5

Making sure our schools are fully funded and money is not wasted and spent on students.



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Additional material

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

ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENTS

Citizens Union believes that all New Yorkers deserve to be represented by officials who work for the public interest and honor the public trust. With the corruption conviction of recent legislative leaders, we seek to endorse a candidate who will demonstrate that they will honor the full commitment of the oath of office, and always represent the public interest above all else.

Please tell us how you have and would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner, and maintain the public trust.

Legitimacy is the key to a well functioning successful government. It is foundational. When the constituents do not trust the government or are unable to easily access information of decisions by government officials or have the ability to contact government officials and agencies in order to express their views on particular issues, people are less likely to feel that the process is legitimate. We need more transparency in government. I would hold myself and my staff to the highest ethical standards and make sure my Office is accessible to the public. As a businessman I have done the same thing. I have worked with thousands of people and created many jobs without any negative history. Communication is key and we need to mandate that public officials are communicating with the public.

Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below. You can submit the questionnaire at the bottom of the preview page by clicking SUBMIT.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. *If you don't see the email, please check your spam box.*

If you have any further questions, you may contact us at candidates@citizensunion.org.

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