

Name	Yuh-Line Niou
Office Sought (New York State)	Assembly
District Number	65
Email	ylforny@gmail.com
Party Affiliation(s)	Democrat, Endorsed by WFP
Age	37
Education	CUNY-Baruch College, MPA. The Evergreen State College,, BA in Social Policy, and Writing
Occupation/Employer	Assemblymember AD65
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement	Assemblymember AD65 2017 - Present National Urban Fellows Board Member - Present Chief of Staff, Assemblymember Ron Kim US Environmental Protection Agency (Washington D.C.) Special Assistant, Office of International and Tribal Affairs Statewide Poverty Action Network Legislative Assistant, Office of Representative Eileen Cody Racial Equity Team - Founder Neighborhood House Board of Trustees Japanese American Citizens League Seattle Chapter Board Member- VP of Civil Rights and Civic Engagement Committee. APIA VOTE for Obama and Governor Gregoire API Community Leadership Foundation-Alumni
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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 current registration and voting system?

a. No-excuse absentee voting (second passage of constitutional amendment)	Support
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	Support

donations eligible and by eliminating the three different tiers for matching

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 police officers, correction officers, and firefighters.

Support

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

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

I've been deeply concerned about the expansion of the Governor's emergency powers during the current crisis. The Governor has held hostage critical aid packages that I want to support, however, because the austerity budget includes provisions for unchecked emergency powers for the Governor, I have voted against the budget and will continue to do so as long as these provisions persist. We cannot sell out our values, democracy, and rights during a crisis -- that is too slippery a slope, and one that has historically always led to disaster for vulnerable communities. The legislature needs to step up and fight for those we represent, and that includes maintaining strong oversight over the executive branch. I've been proud to lead that fight for transparency and oversight, and I will continue to do so.

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

My district in lower Manhattan, which includes neighborhoods such as the Lower East Side, Financial District, Battery Park City, the South Street Seaport Area, and Chinatown, has been hardest hit during this time of crisis. Even before the first cases of the virus appeared in New York, small businesses began to cripple due to pandemic fears and racism. I knew from very early on that our small businesses, working families, and unions were going to be hardest hit by the pandemic due to our government's years of neglect and austerity budgeting that left us sorely unprepared for the ensuing public health crisis and the following economic fallout.

As an Assemblymember, I've been focused on staunching the bleed of the district, and working with grassroots organizations, community leaders, and national efforts to support our communities. The biggest challenge, and one that I've been immensely vocal on is fighting against the austerity budget that continues to cut healthcare, education, and funding going towards critical essential services. I am strongly opposed to the state's "global cap" on Medicaid spending, the property tax cap, and the Governor's policy of limiting spending growth in the state budget each year to 2%. These are artificial limits -- and they hold us back from being able to pass the kind of necessary programs that will change the lives of New Yorkers, programs that will go towards developing our future economy and growth. The State needs to fully fund the foundation aid formula for Pre-K to 12 public schools through CFE funding in order to prepare the next generation of leaders that will generate long-term economic growth, rather than cutting funding going towards these critical programs. I believe in no cuts, no cost shifts, and no fake austerity. New Yorkers can't afford it.

Locally, the biggest challenge for my district revolves around access to resources. My constituents are having issues receiving unemployment assistance, seniors are having trouble getting food and groceries, and the hot meals they usually receive at senior centers, and children and students are experiencing educational resource disparities where students of low-income families do not have access to laptops or high-speed internet for remote learning. My brothers and sisters in labor working in essential services have lost hundreds of members to the virus, and many others are struggling with the massive influx of unemployment in industries that evaporated overnight. Many of the historic small businesses in Chinatown and the Lower East Side have closed permanently and will never return. Residents, many of whom live in public housing, have not been able to afford to pay rent, and yet we have yet to pass a moratorium on rent and mortgage payments. Nurses and doctors are unable to secure food during their overnight shifts as they fight tooth and nail against this pandemic. Law enforcement has criminalized low-income communities of color for walking without a mask while masses continue to gather in parks and gardens. Our homeless communities cannot shelter in place and are not protected from both the harsh changes in weather, and from the pandemic itself. Above all, New Yorkers cannot access the medical testing they need, and we are critically undersupplied in food, PPEs, and supplies.

All these challenges are the direct result of years of neglect and austerity budgeting in our State that has left us critically underfunded and unprepared, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives, an economic recession that will take years to recover from, and an immeasurable amount of suffering for our most vulnerable communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a bright, glaring spotlight on these inequities and inadequacies, and while a longer term solution to that must be part of our dialogue, we also know that we have immediate needs that must be addressed under our current flawed system. These challenges could have all been avoided with progressive sound policies that focused on preventative care and built up a strong social safety net system for all New Yorkers. Right now we have an imperative need to stop the spread of COVID-19 as quickly and effectively as we can.

19. What are the appropriate roles of city, state, and federal governments

Now more than ever, our city, state, and federal governments need to be working hand in hand to tackle this pandemic and public health crisis. The city and state need to be

in a crisis such as this?

looking at solid, progressive tax policies that will generate billions in revenue needed for critical funding to healthcare, pandemic response, and our social safety nets. Our city needs to take the lead in managing local community issues and enforcing social distancing measures to protect our communities. City agencies need to continue their responsibilities to the best of their abilities to provide support and protections for the community. On the state level, we need progressive revenue measures to eliminate our \$6.1 billion deficit and to generate new revenue that will allow the state to reinvest in our communities. I am a strong support of the Billionaire's Tax, the Ultra-millionaire's Tax, the Pied-a-terre Tax, and the Stock Transfer Tax. These progressive taxes will more than adequately fund our most critical needs in public housing, education, and healthcare. Our federal government needs to examine strong fiscal and monetary policy to manage our current economic recession and build a stronger public health infrastructure and invest in the working families that drive our country forward. All levels of government need to be working to combat the two viruses in this country, the COVID-19 virus and the virus of racism and anti-asian discrimination. During times of crisis, we must never forget the values we believe in as legislators, as New Yorkers, and as people, and I will continue to fight for my community on the local level, in the state, and on a national level to ensure that we have an equitable and speedy recovery.

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 plan to continue to promote and have an aggressive constituent outreach program to highlight the CARES relief fund and forthcoming relief funds to my constituents to make sure that they know that this money is out there for them to make use of. With that I also plan to fight for more language access for these programs which is constantly a significant barrier for many of my constituents, whose primary language isn't English, and my office will be assisting those who have issues filling out necessary forms while applying for funding. The funding from the Federal government does not nearly do enough to make whole many of the small businesses and individuals who are hurting due to the impact of COVID-19. We need to be thinking many of the progressive economic policies that we can pursue as a State to ensure strong protections for our working families. We need to do more to support our constituents, residents, and small business owners and I will continue to aggressively advocate until our demands are met.

Campaign Promise 1

I am deeply committed to economic justice and have introduced the Robocall Protection Bill, the General Business Law Bill amendment, and the Small Business Protection Act to protect consumers and small businesses from unlawful, unfair, abusive, and deceptive acts. I introduced and sponsored the Mom & Pop Rent Increase Exemption program to help save NYC's most-beloved small businesses by encouraging landlords to enter into long-term, affordable leases, with fair renewal clauses, with mom & pop retailers. I sponsored and passed prevailing wage legislation that requires all jobs at privately owned, monopoly granted utility companies, like Con Ed, to provide prevailing wage jobs with benefits and fair wages. As Assemblymember, will continue to fight to secure a prevailing and living wage for workers; close the racial wealth gap by increasing access to financial services and ending redlining; and break down barriers that keep people in poverty by removing asset limits on public assistance programs to ensure people can save up instead of forcing people to spend down. Additionally, I will keep fighting to pass paid family leave, block subsidies for businesses and developers that pay poverty wages, and help small businesses prosper by eliminating regulations that only serve to take money away from these businesses.

Campaign Promise 2

As a product of public schools, I know that great schools and access to quality, affordable higher education are the keys to our kids' future. Together with her community, I fought for the CFE funding our schools are owed, worked to secure a state budget increase to \$826 million on school aid, and passed the Dream Act which gives immigrants in NYS a chance to pursue a quality education and build a new life for their families. As Assemblymember, I will address school overcrowding, fight for safe schools free of lead and other toxins, oppose any new developments that don't include plans for the increased demand on our schools, continue to work to get schools the CFE funding they are owed, and end the over-reliance on standardized testing. I am committed to addressing inequality in our school system, fighting to end the school-to-prison pipeline, and breaking down the barriers and inequalities that have led to deeply segregated schools. I will continue to be a tireless champion for better public schools, and work with parents, teachers, and administrators to give all kids the opportunities they deserve.

Campaign Promise 3

With housing costs skyrocketing, I have fought for and will continue to fight for tenants and homeowners to preserve and expand affordable housing and make sure that seniors can stay in the neighborhoods they've always known. In the past legislative sessions, I proudly fought to pass historic strong rent regulations and secured a record \$550 million

in funding going towards NYCHA. I fought for the Rivington Act, which passed both legislative houses, to bring greater transparency and community engagement around the closure of nursing homes. Locally, after 100 residents including seniors and children were ordered to vacate from 85 Bowery due to their landlord's neglect of safety violations and critical building repairs, I worked with and fought for the 85 Bowery residents to return safely to their homes. To ensure situations like 85 Bowery never happen again, I introduced legislation that will hold bad landlords accountable when they willingly let their properties fall into disrepair at the cost of their tenants' safety and security. Most recently, I've introduced and sponsored bills to suspend rent for residential and small business commercial tenants facing hardship, as well as called for property tax relief for small landlords, freezing rent payments at their current levels for the duration of the pandemic crisis and for one year afterwards, halting evictions for residents and small businesses through the duration of the crisis and beyond, and setting up a disaster relief fund for small landlords who experience substantial losses of rent revenue. Housing remains one of the biggest issues facing our city, state, and country. As Assemblymember, I will continue my work on the housing issues that matter most, including fully funding public housing and having more oversight over NYCHA in order to address the horrifying conditions in New York's public housing; working to end homelessness holistically by addressing the increased costs of living and housing while also treating cycles of addiction and violence and ensuring that people are not becoming homeless in the first place; and leading the fight for what ultimately turned out to be the most significant strengthening of tenant protections in a generation.

Campaign Promise 4

New York is a city of immigrants, giving us unparalleled diversity and a richness of the fabric of our city that simply doesn't exist anywhere else in the world. As an immigrant myself, I understand the strength that immigrants can bring to our community, but also the particular challenges many immigrant families face in our country. In this past legislature, I pushed to pass the Dream Act to protect our immigrants from threats on the federal level. I fought for stronger protections against discrimination, increased funds for refugee resettlement programs and legal defense services for immigrants, and measures to ease the financial burden of obtaining citizenship. As Assemblymember, I championed for increased language access across government services, and will continue to break down these barriers at the state and city level.

I have been and will continue to be a champion for civil rights and defending our community's values. As you might have seen, I have been an outspoken advocate for the Child Victims Act which brings justice to survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In this past session, I cosponsored and passed the Reproductive Health Act to solidifies Roe v. Wade into our state law and further protect women's reproductive rights. My colleagues and I also passed landmark sexual harassment protections for all New Yorkers, including mandating that all employers have a sexual harassment policy, employee training, and a clear complaint and investigation process. Together with criminal justice advocates, we passed historic reforms to fix our broken criminal justice system which disproportionately affected Black, Latinx, and low-income families, with the elimination of cash bail through alternate release and discovery reform. These reforms are the first steps towards a more equitable criminal justice system and as Assemblymember, I will continue to fight to ensure that our system works and that our community remains safe for all.

Campaign Promise 5

I believe that the only people legislators should be accountable to are their constituents and the people of New York. Our community has been hurt by corruption like no other, and we need legislators who have the commitment and ability to clean up Albany. As Assemblymember, I have been fighting for public financing of campaigns because it is a real, viable system that can fight back against corruption and send a message to our constituents that their voices matter. I am proud to see the legislature move towards a robust public campaign finance system to help level the playing field and provide people of color and women the opportunity to fairly fund campaigns and win. I will continue to work to strip pensions for corrupt politicians, support common sense reform to our special election process, and furthering our newly won public financing system to reduce the influence of special interests and open the door for more candidates to run for office. Additionally, I am committed to closing the egregious "LLC Loophole," which lets developers and other businesses give massive campaign contributions that are many times higher than the legal limit. These measures work to restore trust in our democracy and help elect the best representative to office, not whoever happens to be the most well-connected to special interests. As a small-dollar driven and people-driven candidate that does not accept contributions from real estate developers, the fossil fuel industry, and other interests that directly harm our communities, I have been and will always proud to fight for a more transparent and representative government for all.



[Yuh-Line Niou for New York 2020 - Endorsements, Financial, and Vol Information.pdf](#)

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.

I've spent my entire life working in public service, and with that experience, I know how important it is to elect representatives who not only have the public service experience to advocate and support their communities, but also how important it is to fight for our accountability and transparency from our legislators. Since I was elected, I have always fought for greater transparency and accountability from our government and our agencies, from calling for NYCHA funding to be released to fighting for overdue CFE funding for our schools, these are responsibilities and fights we must be committed to as legislators.

To increase transparency in government, I have been one of the strongest advocates for language-access for all government documents and in our community engagement tools. Government needs to be accessible to all, and I have always considered that one of my top priorities in office. My district office speaks over 7 languages to communicate with the diverse communities living in my district. We host mobile district offices to bring constituent services directly to our community in the languages they most prefer, with the resources and information they need. Our annual legislative and budgetary town hall attracts hundreds of constituents every year, and aims to shed light on our budgetary process which has remained behind closed doors for far too many years. These are all community and government initiatives that are critical towards providing quality and accessible constituent services for our communities, and building the people's trust in legislators who understand their issues, and will never stop fighting on their behalf.

Furthermore, I believe we need representatives who understand that representation means advocating and considering the issues and concerns of all constituents. My political philosophy stems from my belief that everything is interconnected. We can't address the affordable housing crisis without also addressing climate change. We can't protect our vulnerable and marginalized communities without also passing criminal justice reforms and working to decriminalize sex work. This is true everywhere, but it's particularly true when we're talking about quality healthcare, diverse representation, and equal protections for all. I think it's crucial that policymakers take a comprehensive and intersectional approach to governance.

At my core, I'm an organizer and coalition-builder. I believe in linking people together across disciplines and interests in order to best serve our communities. I also believe that policy is layered, and that everyone's perspectives are valid and necessary when collaboratively creating great policy. We need to make sure that our lawmakers are diverse in order to make sure our multifaceted problems can be looked at from all different angles.

Last, I believe that we need legislators with not only dedication to, but also years of experience in public service. I am currently the only Asian-American woman representative in the New York State Legislature, and the only candidate running for this seat with over 17 years of state-level experience. During my 17 years working on state legislation, I've dedicated my efforts towards: Economic justice and fighting poverty through strong consumer protection laws to close loopholes which allow predatory practices that prey on working families and communities

of color;

Fighting for environmental justice including green jobs, full transition to clean energy, and reducing air, water, and noise pollution.

Insisting on a safe and harassment free workplace for all New Yorkers and all workers;

Working as an advocate and organizer on anti-poverty issues by building a broad coalition to fight predatory lending and assist low-income families build financial assets;

Fighting for workers' right to unionize, prevailing wage, paid sick days, safe staffing, access to affordable health care for all workers and clear definitions of who is an employee and who is an independent contractor;

Advocating for permanent and deeply affordable housing for all;

Fair and transparent elections, and campaign finance reform to support public financing;

Fighting for transparency, language access, and accessibility in government for youth and working families

I'm running for reelection because my community needs someone that listens to their needs and fights for all of us. I have always stood on the side of workers and working families. We need to take big money out of politics and focus our policy back on serving our most vulnerable communities, many of whom are working people who live in my district. I am proud to always fight on the side of the people.