

Candidate Questionnaire Local Candidates Committee NYS Legislative Elections 2018

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York State, and our interest in reforming state government. Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than July 1st. 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 preference for the Primary and endorsement for the General Election. Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Please contact us if you wish to be interviewed.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues.

We thank you very much for your response.

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: **Andrew Gounardes**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democratic**

Age: 33

Education: **Hunter College, B.A. in Political Science, George Washington University Law School, J.D.**

Office Sought/District: **New York State Senate, District 22**

Occupation/Employer: **General Counsel to the Brooklyn Borough President, Eric Adams**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: **I co-founded Bay Ridge Cares, an organization that prepared 25,000 hot meals for victims after Superstorm Sandy, which still operates today. I also formed the “Concerned R Train Riders” to fight for better service and demand handicapped accessible subway stations in South Brooklyn. I worked with Bay Ridge Advocates for Keeping Everyone Safe (B.R.A.K.E.S.) and successfully pressured Albany lawmakers to allow speed cameras in school zones. Additionally, because I believe in the importance of art and culture in our neighborhoods, I served as pro bono legal counsel for the Bay Ridge Storefront Art Walk (S.A.W.), and also as past president of the Bay Ridge Historical Society. I also previously ran for this seat in 2012.**

(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: **Dan Merwin, dan@andrewgounardes.com**

Additional Staff Contact: **Dara Adams, dara@andrewgounardes.com**

Address: **351 87th St, Brooklyn, NY 11209**

Telephone: **929-269-6180**

Fax: **N/A**

Website: **andrewgounardes.com**

Email: andrew@andrewgounardes.com

Twitter: @agounardes

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/agounardes/>

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

I. AFFIRMATIONS

Have you completed required campaign finance filings? **YES** / NO

Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee? **YES** / NO

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

Signature of Candidate:

Date: 7/1/18



II. CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures, and feel free to may elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.

2018 PRIORITY ISSUES:

ETHICS

1. Limit outside compensation earned by state legislators and statewide officials to 25% of their salaries, while enacting a salary increase and eliminating stipends. **Support** / Oppose
2. Reform the Joint Commission on Public Ethics to eliminate the ability of one party to veto an investigation and to increase disclosure of its decision-making. **Support** / Oppose

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

3. Do you support or oppose the following changes to the state's current registration and voting system?
 - a. Early voting **SUPPORT**
 - b. No-excuse absentee voting **SUPPORT**
 - c. Election Day voter registration **SUPPORT**
 - d. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief **SUPPORT**

e. Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out **SUPPORT**

f. Consolidated state and federal primaries **SUPPORT**

g. Electronic poll books **SUPPORT**

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

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

5. Establish public financing of campaigns for state legislative and statewide offices using a method similar to New York City's Campaign Finance Law. **Support** / Oppose

6. Close the LLC loophole to ensure that limited liability companies have the same contribution limits as corporations, rather than the higher limit for individuals. **Support** / Oppose

7. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits and reduce them even further from registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state. **Support** / Oppose

BUDGET PROCESS

8. 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

9. Provide for adequate 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

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

10. Repeal Civil Rights Law, Sec. 50-a, which shields from public view the disciplinary records of police officers, correction officers, and firefighters. **Support** / Oppose

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

11. Restructure the state Board of Elections to abolish the strict two-party division of governance and operation and putting in place professional, nonpartisan administration. **Support** / Oppose

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

Support / Oppose

HOME RULE

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

Support / Oppose

Please use the space provided or a separate sheet of paper to elaborate on your positions on the issues

contained in the previous pages. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

III. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

In addition to evaluating stances on the issues above, Citizens Union also considers the campaign goals articulated to voters.

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

Please feel free to use additional paper if the space provided is not sufficient, and to affix additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements. We thank you very much for your response.

I don't make explicit promises in my campaign, but I do pledge to work hard to see my legislative priorities enacted:

- 1. I want to secure needed funding to reduce class size, secure and retain the best teachers. Our education system is the backbone of New York City. We must improve the quality of life for both our students and our teachers.**
- 2. I want to introduce an amendment to the New York State Constitution that makes New York the first state to guarantee free, quality, public education from Pre-K to college. I believe that education should be as accessible as possible to all New Yorkers regardless of their economic status.**
- 3. I want to fight for speed cameras in every school zone. These speed cameras will keep our kids safe, and ensure that dangerous drivers will be punished.**
- 4. I want to improve the MTA in using a two-fold approach. Firstly, I want to make the MTA more accountable by giving riders a direct vote on the MTA Board so that the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on mass transit will go to service improvements and not wasteful spending. Secondly, I want to restore dedicated revenue and spending so money is actually spent on improving speed, quality, and reliability of trains and rehabilitating our subway stations including structural and architectural components.**
- 5. I want to eliminate the corrosive effect of money in politics by enacting public financing of our elections, so that our politicians stop catering to donors who donate tens of thousands of dollars and focus on the people who elect them.**

IV. 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 she/he 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.

Once I'm elected, I plan to be one of the most transparent elected officials in the state. Too many

politicians hide in their offices, and don't listen to the concerns and worries of their constituents. Once their campaign ends, they stop interacting with the people that got them elected. I will *not* do this. I plan on having open hours, so constituents can voice their concerns and help me govern more efficiently and accurately. Along with this, I plan on holding regular town halls, where *everyone* will be given a platform and a voice to tell me how I'm doing.

I believe that many people are looking for an open, transparent, and accessible elected official. I promise to be one, if I am elected.

Please return to: Citizens Union, Local Candidates Committee, 299 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10007 Via email to candidates@citizensunion.org or fax to 212.227.0345 • Call us at 212-227-0342 with questions