

# 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: **Jose Gustavo Rivera**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat, Working Families**

Age: **42**

Education: **B.A., University of Puerto Rico; Doctoral Program in Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center (in progress).**

Office Sought/District: **Senate / 33 District**

Occupation/Employer: **New York State Senator for the 33rd Senate District**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: *(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)*

- Board Member, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, June 2018 - Present
- Director of Outreach, Office of US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, New York, NY April 2009 – May 2010
- Constituency Director, Florida, Obama for America, Tampa, FL, July 2008 – December 2008
- Consultant, SEIU Local 1199, New York, NY, February 2008 – June 2008
- Chief of Staff, Office of New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, January 2007 – September 2007
- Regional Director, Office of State Senate Democratic Leader, David A. Paterson, New York, NY, December 2003 – December 2006
- Deputy Field Director, Friends of Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, October 2006 – November 2006
- Deputy Field Director, John Sabini for State Senate, Queens, NY, August 2006 – September 2006
- Part Time Adjunct Lecturer, PACE University, New York, NY, September 2005 – Present
- Field Director, New Yorkers for Ferrer 2005, Bronx, NY, October 2005 – November 2005
- Campaign Manager, People for Melissa Mark-Viverito 2005, New York, NY, August 2005 – September 2005
- Deputy Field Director, Friends of Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Yonkers, NY, October 2004 – November 2004
- Deputy Field Director, Serrano for State Senate, New York, NY, July 2004 – September 2004
- VP, Campaign Services, The PoliProd Group, Brooklyn, NY, May 2003 – January 2004
- Conference Consultant, PACE University, New York, NY, September 2003 – January 2004
- Campaign Manager, Friends of Philip Reed, New York, NY, June 2003 – November 2003

## Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: **Miguel Rondon**

Additional Staff Contact: **Jay Baez**

Address: **70 E 184 Street, 2nd Floor, Bronx, NY 10468**

Telephone: **646-431-1272**

Fax: N/A

Website: <http://www.gustavoforthebronx.com>

Email: [Miguelrondon92@gmail.com](mailto:Miguelrondon92@gmail.com)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Rivera4TheBronx>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Gustavo.Rivera.For.State.Senate/?fref=ts>

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

## 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: 7/3/2018

## 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 a. **Support**/Oppose

b. No-excuse absentee voting b. **Support**/Oppose

- c. Election Day voter registration c. **Support**/Oppose
- d. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief d. **Support**/Oppose
- e. Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out e. **Support**/Oppose
- f. Consolidated state and federal primaries f. **Support**/Oppose
- g. Electronic poll books g. **Support**/Oppose

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. 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.

**I support making the primary date the same for all elections, saving us taxpayer money. However as a state legislator now for 8 years who travels up to Albany sometimes 4-6 days a week, I have found that making contact with the residents of my district during legislative session becomes limited. Holding elections during legislative session makes it even more difficult for a representative to do his/her job at the same time meet voters. I am not sure two weeks is enough time after session. Maybe the solution is to end legislative session earlier or later, and change the fiscal year in the process, which would alter the demands of legislative session vis-à-vis campaign season. We should be able to find a happy medium between cost efficient elections and the demands of government.**

**I understand the concerns with the two-party system and agree with many of the goals of Citizens Union to ensure that the “duopolistic” nature of the party system is dismantled. This is one of the reasons why I proudly sought and received the endorsement of the Working Families Party, and why I have supported candidates running on the WFP line. It has inserted “competition” into the party system in New York, and I think it has given progressive candidates such as myself the opportunity to win elections.**

**The problem I have with doing away with partisan elections is that, for better or for worse, right now political parties are the only way to mobilize voters who do not have the resources to mobilize themselves. The citizens I represent in the Bronx, who do not have the time or money to become involved in politics, would be hurt by nonpartisan elections. Absent campaign finance reform and the FULL public financing of campaigns, it would further lead to wealthy individuals influencing campaigns. It is unconscionable to me, for instance, that an individual can spend nearly a quarter billion dollars of his own money to win an election for mayor three times. Nonpartisan elections would do nothing to curb that problem, and would do nothing to mobilize the poorest voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote.**

### **III. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS (PAST AND CURRENT)**

In addition to evaluating stances on the issues above, Citizens Union also assesses incumbents on how well they kept the promises made to voters during the previous election.

As an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- what were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current seat and what progress has been made in keeping those promises?
- 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.

#### **TOP FIVE CAMPAIGN PROMISES FROM LAST ELECTION AND ACTION ON THEM**

- 1. Achieve Public Financing of campaigns at the state level.**
- 2. Passing the Dream Act.**
- 3. Passing GENDA**
- 4. Closing the LLC Loophole**
- 5. Codifying the Special Prosecutor power of the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute cases of police misconduct into law.**

#### **TOP FIVE 2018 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS**

- 1. Pass the New York Health Act**
- 2. Achieve Public Financing of campaigns at the state level.**
- 3. Passing the Dream Act.**
- 4. Passing GENDA**
- 5. Closing the LLC Loophole**

### **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.

**I trust voters will remember why I ran for this office in 2010 and whom I defeated. I ran to combat the rampant public corruption in the Bronx and New York State and restore the people's trust. In these past 8 years, I firmly believe I can say that the residents of my district have come to know me, my ethics, my sense of public service, and my commitment to them – not only by what I have said and done and stood for, but how I have conducted myself in the process. I have held myself and my staff to the highest ethical standards while elected officials around me in the Bronx and beyond have gone to prison because of corruption. Individuals may not always agree with me on the issues. But I don't believe anyone can say with a straight face that I have served in this office out of the desire for ambition or personal gain.**

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