



Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee

NYC Public Advocate Special Election 2019

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York City and our interest in reforming city and state government. **Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than January 3rd.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for New York City Public Advocate, and to issue our endorsement in the Special 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 publish returned questionnaires on our website, in printed voters directory, and in other appropriate venues. We thank you very much for your response.

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: **Anthony Herbert**

Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat**

Age: 54

Education: **College**

Office Sought: **New York City Public Advocate**

Occupation/Employer: **Consultant**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: *President/CEO & Chairman of the Multi-Cultural Restaurant & Night Life Chamber of Commerce; Founder & President of Advocates Without Borders Network; Exec Comm NAACP-NYCHA Branch Chapter; Executive Vice President of Youth Step USA; Chair of the African American International Chamber of Commerce; member in good standing of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Masons of NY and a proud member of United Goodwill Temple Community Church.*

Candidate Cell Phone: **347 977 2300**

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: **Gloria Rodriguez Novo**

Additional Staff Contact:

Address: **c/o Anthony Mauriello 16 Driggs Street, Staten Island, NY 10308**

Telephone: **917 217 4426**

Fax:

Website: **www.herbert4NYC.com**

Email: **herbert4NYC@gmail.com**

Twitter: **https://twitter.com/herbert4nyc**

Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/tonyherbertnyc/**

Affirmations

Have you completed required campaign finance filings?

YES

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

YES

Happily

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites of being considered for Citizens Union's endorsement.)

Signature of Candidate:

Date: **12/13/18**

I. POLICY QUESTIONS

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

CITIZEN UNION ISSUES

1. What is your position with respect to eliminating party primaries and establishing a nonpartisan election system in which all candidates participate in the first round and the top two candidates advance to the second round? All registered voters regardless of party would be eligible to vote in both rounds.	Support
2. What is your position on instituting ranked choice voting in all elections for citywide office, including all special elections?	Support
3. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	Support
4. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. borough presidents? b. The Conflicts of Interest Board? c. The Public Advocate? d. community boards? <i>I would also establish an independent budget line for Parks</i>	a. Support b. Support c. Support d. Support

ISSUES OF CITYWIDE IMPORTANCE

5. How would you use the office of the Public Advocate to impact public policy to serve the broad public interest?

I will use the office to ensure that ALL New Yorkers receive the services they are entitled to and that they have easy access to information about how their government is functioning so they can assess whether their interests are being served. The power of investigation/oversight, the ability to introduce legislation and the power to require the flow of information to the public are the tools that I will use to achieve those goals.

6. What would be your most important legislative and non-legislative priorities as Public Advocate?

*My legislative priority would be to introduce **NYC Business First** legislation that will mandate the use of New York City businesses for projects where New York City tax dollars are spent and to require at least 30% of the project budget be allocated to NYC certified MWDBE's located in New York City. Exceptions will only be made in unique situations where products/services are not available within NYC. In that case the agency will need to utilize businesses located within New York State. Last resort is to utilize businesses located outside NYS. The legislation will require that agencies report on sub-contractor use, MWDBE compliance and exceptions. The report will be published within the Data Portal annually so that the public can see where the need for new business exists and so SBS and EDC can focus on attracting those businesses.*

My non-legislative priority will be to investigate the Department of Homeless Services and the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene to assess what has gone wrong with the process of addressing homelessness among the severely mentally ill. My past work with mentally ill homeless women provided me the opportunity to understand the correlation between mental illness and homelessness. Homelessness is one of the biggest problems in NYC. It negatively impacts: public health and safety, police performance, sanitation, transportation, economic development, tourism and overall quality of life in NYC.

My recommendation for dealing with this problem is to provide supportive housing for mentally ill homeless within public hospitals that have unused space due to the increase of ambulatory surgery and shorter hospital stays. Converting unused space into Single Resident Occupancies will provide mentally ill homeless with voluntary, supportive housing close to medical professionals whom they can turn to if and when they need help.

The positive snowball effect of the SRO Program - In addition to providing housing for severely mentally ill, the SRO program within hospitals will: maintain union jobs; reduce the need to build neighborhood shelters which users deem dangerous and communities do not want; free up existing affordable units for non mentally ill homeless; allow judges to divert severely mentally ill into the SRO program instead of jail; reduce jail population to elevate safety for the incarcerated and correction officers; remove the pressure for judges to release on their own recognizance (ROR) non-mentally ill repeat misdemeanor offenders ie: those charged with assault and sexual harassment, which provides peace of mind to crime victims; allow family members and friends to weigh in on whether or not to post bail for those arrested for actions pertaining to addiction/alcoholism or domestic violence (families often withhold bail to protect the suspect from his/her illness or protect family members from suspects); increase police moral due to the knowledge that judges are making decisions based on facts rather than outside pressures; create a perception of greater public safety which reduces mistakes made due to police anxiety; increase the quality of life for residents, visitors, workers, victims, suspects and criminals.

Tax dollars ear marked for homeless shelters and neighborhood jails can be used for initial SRO conversions. Revenue generated through increased tourism, and tax collection from new businesses developed through the NYC Business First legislation will be used to expand the program and to provide developer incentives to construct more affordable housing.

7. What do you consider to be the three most important oversight functions of the Public Advocate?

When used tenaciously, the powers of the Public Advocate can positively impact the way city government functions.

- 1. I will use my position as Chair of the Commission of Public Information and Communication (COPIC) to ensure that the City operates in a transparent manner and that New Yorkers know what their government is doing to serve them.*
- 2. I will use the power of investigation to uncover the inefficiencies in Mental Health, Homeless, ACS and NYCHA during my first term.*
- 3. I will monitor citizen complaints and use my power to ensure that agencies and, where applicable, the City Council, address them, then publish a report on outcome so that the Mayor and City Council has an accurate snap shot of how their agendas are affecting citizens.*
- 4. My appointments will be strong, capable and independent minded individuals who are not afraid to speak up to protect the interest of New Yorkers.*

8. The most recent Public Advocate has used litigation extensively, with mixed results, at least with regard to the Public Advocate's standing to bring a lawsuit. What is your view on the Public Advocate's use of litigation to attempt to force policy changes?

I prefer to try to build consensus before initiating lawsuits against public entities because win or lose the taxpayer foots the bill. I will, however, explore the possibility of bringing suit against NYCHA and the MTA in the future.

9. What discrepancies, if any, do you see between services promised to New Yorkers and services rendered? For those listed please indicate your proposals for bringing policy closer to practice.

Affordable Housing - The de Blasio administration promised to increase affordable housing throughout NYC. While some units have been added through private development, thousands of NYCHA apartments have been removed from rent rolls because they have fallen into such disrepair that they are no longer habitable. The city budget has increased by \$20 Billion. \$13 Billion is needed to fix all of NYCHA yet only \$3 Billion has been allocated after the Mayor was mandated to do so. The Mayor's plan to sell off NYCHA property to private developers and implement RAD will leave poor New Yorkers vulnerable to eviction. program As Public Advocate I will pressure the Mayor and City Council to include adequate spending for NYCHA repairs in the budget and actively seek to build a consensus between City, State and Federal government to improve the conditions of NYCHA without selling off public land to private developers for luxury housing or the implementation of RAD which exposes residents to being evicted and their unit moved to market rent in the case of non-payment.

Mental Illness - Mayor de Blasio and Public Advocate James condemned the Bloomberg administration for their handling of the homeless crisis. Both said they would develop a comprehensive plan to reduce homelessness yet today homelessness is at record levels. Severely mentally ill and drug addicts makeup a large percentage of the homeless population. As Public Advocate I will investigate the Department of Homeless Services and the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene to assess current programs to increase success. I will also recommend a comprehensive plan to convert underutilized space in City hospitals to SROs for severely mentally ill where they can live independently but close enough to medical help should they need it. Funds to build neighborhood jails and homeless shelters will be used for the conversion. (See above)

Rikers Island - This administration has created a movement to close Rikers Island and replace it with neighborhood jails. The basis for the movement is supposedly humanitarian but in fact it is driven by money. The Mayor plans to sell Rikers to developers for luxury housing. I would address issues at Rikers by removing the mentally ill from the mix as stated above. Based on the implementation of my plan to help the severely mentally ill live independently, I would try to build consensus to scrap the plan to sell Rikers and instead work with the Department of Corrections in cooperation with Correction Officers to create a compassionate operation plan for Rikers. (See above)

10. How would you approach the responsibilities of the Public Advocate regarding access to public information in monitoring the implementation of the city's Open Data Law?

I will continue to monitor the data portal to ensure that it is user friendly so New Yorkers can access the information they are seeking.

My goal will be to ensure that government functions are transparent and that citizens can easily assess whether the government they elected is truly serving their interests.

11. What specifically will you do as Public Advocate to ensure New York achieves a full and complete Census count in 2020?

As Public Advocate, it will be my duty to ensure that the public understand the way in which government is serving them. I will provide links to important information on my website and I will host annual town hall meetings in every borough to educate New Yorkers about government actions that affect their daily lives. Most Americans do not understand how participating in the Census will affect them. I will utilize the tools available to my office to educate and encourage participation.

12. How would you leverage the office of Public Advocate to address any of the following issues, if not discussed in answering previous questions:

- A. **Affordable Housing** - *I will press both the City Council and the Mayor to create a capital budget plan for the repair of NYCHA developments across the City and dedicate at least 20% of the annual budget to paying for repairs and upgrades. I would also press the Mayor and Governor to work cooperatively to increase affordable housing throughout the city through tax incentives. (See above)*
- B. **Public Safety** - *Perception is a powerful tool to ensure public safety. Providing housing and assistance for the severely mentally ill homeless will increase public safety by removing the threat presented by unstable individuals, free up law enforcement to deal with dangerous criminals, reduce the unsanitary conditions on public streets which will increase pedestrian use of sidewalks which is a deterrent to crime. (See above)*
- C. **Public Transportation** - *I would utilize my appointees to the New York Transit Riders Council to vocalize the need for efficiencies to be put into place at the MTA before they entertain fare hikes. The PCAC must do more to protect the transit rider. Fare hikes must be a last resort to close budget gaps. All opportunities for efficiencies at the MTA must be explored, including separating the entity.*
- D. **Health and Environment** - *Helping the severely mentally ill and moving them to Single Residency Occupancy units in City Hospitals will be my top priority because it will have a positive impact on our public health budget and reduce the spread of disease. (See above)*
- E. **Economic Development** - *We must stop sending the message that we do not support the small businesses located in our city and state. I will introduce NYC Business First legislation mandating that city dollars be spent with New York City and businesses and that 30% of city contract budgets be awarded to NYC registered MWDBE's. (See above)*
- F. **Education**- *Our High School vocational programs must include training for the jobs needed to keep this city running. Training to work as a subway conductor, custodian, superintendent of NYCHA buildings, bus driver, sanitation worker, street paver etc. should be offered in cooperation with unions for these disciplines so graduates can enter apprentice programs straight out of High School.*

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.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

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

If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises to evaluate your performance while in office, as well as to evaluate your candidacy in the future.

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 2017 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

- 1. Reduce homelessness;*
- 2. Repair NYCHA and create more affordable housing;*
- 3. Create jobs through small business growth;*
- 4. Create a ready, willing and able workforce by offering vocational training for High School students who prefer to work with their hands;*
- 5. More dependable and affordable public transportation;*

III. 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 public trust. With the corruption conviction of recent state 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 will always represent the public interest above all else.

Please tell us how you would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner.

My mother taught me to always help others and to recognize that there are always those needier than me. My family was homeless for a time because of gentrification and I promised myself that I would always be willing to help anyone who was in danger of losing their home. I have spent the last 10 years volunteering my time for organizations that advocate on behalf of those who have no voice. I believe that rules provide order so they should be followed or changed if they no longer serve a purpose. I can make no greater promise than the one I have made to my God, myself and my family, to act as an upstanding citizen in order to continue helping others.

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.