

Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee

NYS Legislative Elections 2018

POSITIONS PAPER

Ethics:

1. The state Legislature should do what Congress did after Watergate: dramatically restrict outside earned income for lawmakers, and enact strong disclosure and conflict-of-interest rules for income earned by lawmakers and senior staff. New York State should follow the congressional model for limiting the amount of outside earned income to 15% (at the most 25%) of the highest salary actually paid to any sitting legislator and prohibit legislators and senior staff from engaging in services that involve a fiduciary relationship.
 - a. Additionally, New York should adopt a Code of Ethics that clearly states that public office is a public trust and makes clear that state lawmakers are accountable to the public first and foremost.
 - b. New York should use the financial disclosure provisions of the State of Alaska and District of Columbia. They establish a scope of disclosure, and level of detail that New York can use as models for the reporting of outside income.
2. To truly achieve change, the Governor and Legislatures' vetoes must be dropped in favor of a simple majority vote, empowering JCOPE to investigate all claims of wrongdoing. Only when the law is enforced evenly between the Executive and the Legislature and across party lines will the "Public Integrity Reform Act" be more than just words.

Elections and Voting:

1. Critical reforms need to be put into place to reform special elections. Especially since special elections have the lowest voter turnout rates of any elections in New York. New Yorkers are both unable to participate in the process of nominating special election candidates and are not turning out to essentially ratify the choices of party leaders. In the New York State Assembly for example, one third of the entire body, or 49 of 150 legislators, were first elected in a special election. I support the measures Citizens Union has introduced to reform this process:
 - a. Holding a party primary election at least thirty days in advance of the special election;
or
 - b. Holding one non-partisan special election along the lines of the current process for filling vacancies in the New York City Council in which the ballot is open to all who can petition on to it.

Campaign Finance:

1. I support the measures Citizens Union has outlined to make campaign financing more accountable and transparent:
 - a. statutes and regulations must be changed to drastically reduce contribution limits, strengthen oversight and tighten enforcement, restrict, if not ban, soft money contributions, and require greater disclosure, and
 - b. public financing with sufficient funds matched from private contributions must be enacted.

Budget Process:

1. I fully support and I am committed to making state spending more transparent and accountable. Measures that would facilitate this process like, facilitating and encouraging public and legislative review by presenting the budget bills and supporting executive documents in an understandable and consistent format, are the first steps in this transition. Disclosure of grants received and itemization of state spending are additional steps that must be taken if we want to achieve the goal of transparency and accountability.

Police Accountability:

1. To further police accountability I would create a truly independent prosecutor for police misconduct to investigate the death of civilians at the hands of police.
2. Additionally, I would support wide sweeping NYPD reforms that would make transparency and accountability its priorities. Reforms are not only desperately needed, but absolutely necessary should we care to restore public trust in those sworn to protect them.

Election Administration:

1. I support measures to make the board of elections more accountable, transparent, and most importantly, nonpartisan.

Home Rule:

1. I agree with the consensus of educational specialists in New York City that mayoral control has proved to be a more effective way to run our schools than elected school boards. Thus far, graduation rates and performance test scores have improved under mayoral control. However, I am disappointed in the abuses of power mayoral control was supposed to address. Ultimately, I believe mayoral control can be effective when there is greater transparency and more checks and balances on corruption and patronage.