



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 1<sup>st</sup>.** 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.

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**Biographical Information**

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Candidate Name: **Melissa Sklarz**

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Party Affiliation(s): **Democrat** Age: **67**

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Education: **SUNY Buffalo, BA in Political Science**

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Office Sought/District: **30th Assembly District**

**Formerly Director of Development at Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund. Currently full time candidate**

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Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

**board co-chair of Empire State Pride Agenda; member Governor Cuomo LGBT Memorial Commission; Secretary of the Northern Regular Democratic Club; member Powhatan Democratic**

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

**Campaign Contact Information**

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Campaign Manager Name: **Michael Czaczkes** Additional Staff Contact:

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Address: **Campaign Address: 3925 61st St. P.O. Box 770283 - Woodside NY 11377**

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Telephone: **917-285-0277** Fax:

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Website: **www.melissa2018.com** Email: **melissa@melissa2018.com**

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Twitter: **@MelissaSklarz** Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/MSklarz/**

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

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## I. AFFIRMATIONS

No because filing not due till July 14 - and we registered campaign in Feb. 2018

Have you completed required campaign finance filings?	YES / <b>NO</b>
Are you willing to be interviewed by CU's Local Candidates Committee?	<b>YES</b> / NO
<i>(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union endorsements.)</i>	
Signature of Candidate: 	Date: June 30, 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.	<b>Support</b> / 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.	<b>Support</b> / 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. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
b. No-excuse absentee voting	b. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
c. Election Day voter registration	c. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
d. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically <u>through legislation</u> , without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief	d. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
e. Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out	e. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
f. Consolidated state and federal primaries	f. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
g. Electronic poll books	g. <b>Support</b> /Oppose
4. Reform the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative seats and eliminate delays in filling vacancies.	<b>Support</b> / 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.	<b>Support</b> / 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.	<b>Support</b> / 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
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**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
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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
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**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
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**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
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12. Empower the attorney general to investigate and prosecute election law malfeasance and cases of public corruption.	Support / Oppose
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**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
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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.

**ETHICS:** (1) Reform legislative compensation to address salary, lulus, and outside income; (2) Limit the influence of dark money campaign contributions by closing the LLC loophole; (3) Reform JCOPE to make it more transparent; expand jurisdiction to include executive and legislative branch employees; and elevate the independence of the commissioners; (4) Streamline and standardize disclosure of lobbying activity for better analysis and easier evaluation.

**ELECTIONS/VOTING:** To ensure accessibility, equity and efficiency in the state's electoral process, we must establish a seven-day early voting period for registered New York voters to vote in person prior to any primary, special or general election day; amend the New York State Constitution to allow no excuse absentee voting to allow busy New Yorkers more options for casting their ballots; and establishing an online voter registration process

CAMPAIGN FINANCE: We must look at establishing an optional public financing system for state campaigns. Under proposed legislation, eligible contributions to candidates for statewide office up to \$250 would be matched at the rate of \$6 by the state for every \$1 contributed. Participating candidates could receive up to \$2,000 in donations. Unopposed candidates in general or special elections would not be eligible and the system would require unspent public funds to be returned 30 days after the election. We must also look at lowering contribution limits; requiring campaign committees to reveal the occupation and employer of a an individual donating; and requiring the disclosure of "bundling" - the act of an individual donating contributions through various people and/or sources.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY: I support legislation to repeal Civil Rights Law 50-a (CRL 50-a), to allow for the public disclosure of police records relating to police misconduct. Over 30 organizations throughout New York City and New York State have indicated their support. New York is one of only three states that gives specific protection to police officers' records. Without transparency, officers are less accountable to the communities they serve. In addition, New York has safeguards already provided by New York's Public Officers Law, which prevents records from being disclosed when they constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, are compiled for law enforcement purposes, or endanger the life or safety of any person. Also, the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) provides all government entities with a process for reviewing and responding to requests for records

### 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.

#### TOP FIVE 2018 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. ~~HEALTHCARE: Our nation's healthcare system is broken and every day, we see further attacks from the federal government. New York has the ability to create a stronger single payer healthcare system and improve access to healthcare facilities for everyone. In addition, I am committed to standing up for healthcare workers' rights, better unionization for healthcare workers, and greater funding for public hospitals.~~

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2. ~~WOMEN: The nation's women's rights movement took root here in New York and we've never looked back but there is still more work to be done to advance equality and promote opportunity for women. We must enshrine access to reproductive health care into New York State law by passing the Reproductive Health Act and passing the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act; expand child care options for parents; expose more young girls to STEM to close the gender gap in math and science; protect employees from discrimination based on their reproductive health care decisions.~~

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3. ~~HOUSING: Too many New Yorkers are just one or two paychecks away from losing the roof over their heads. There are clear steps that Albany can take to improve the situation. As an Assembly Member I intend to fight for providing tax relief to working class families and enacting a first-time home buyer assistance program that lets people save for their first down payment tax-free; giving New York City control over our own rent laws; repealing vacancy decontrol so rents stay affordable even after a rent-stabilized or rent-controlled tenant moves out and banning the vacancy bonus that gives landlords a 20% increase in rent each time an apartment turns over rewarding landlords for harassing tenants.~~

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4. ~~EDUCATION: public education is the most important service that government can provide. It has made the American dream possible for generations and every student in New York is entitled to a chance to realize that dream. I will fight to: secure needed funding to reduce class size, secure and retain the best teachers, and stay abreast of an ever-changing technological landscape; increase after-school program availability; and make New York the first state in the nation to constitutionally guarantee free, quality education from pre-kindergarten through college for every student so that funding for education is not a political football.~~

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5. ~~TRANSPORTATION: the State controls the MTA budget and policies, and we need more strong voices in Albany to fight for a better bus system, subway system and reducing congestion. I will be pushing the MTA to be more transparent in their spending, to make fixing our aging signal system a priority, and advocate for a world class bus system that meets the needs of those living in the 30th Assembly District, part of which is a transit desert, far from the nearest subway.~~

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