

Candidate Questionnaire Local Candidates Committee NYS 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 20th. Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for Governor of New York State, 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: **Larry Sharpe**

Party Affiliation(s): Libertarian **Age: 50**

Education: **BA in Anthropology from University of MD**

Office Sought: **Governor**

Occupation/Employer: **Business Consultant/Owner, Neo-Sage Group**

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: **Libertarian Party Candidate for Vice President - 2016, US Marine Corps.**

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: **Brian Waddell**

Additional Staff Contact: **Trishanda Barhorst, Director of Communications**

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Email: **trishanda.barhorst@larrysharpe.com**

Twitter: **@LarrySharpe**

Facebook: **Larry Sharpe for New York**

I. AFFIRMATIONS

Have you completed required campaign finance filings? **YES**

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

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

Signature of Candidate:



A handwritten signature in black ink is written over a horizontal line. Below the line, the words "AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE" are printed in a small, sans-serif font. To the right of the signature, the letters "MP" are printed.

Date: **September 27, 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. **Oppose, it's better to reduce salaries for legislators than to have career politicians. NH legislators get \$100/session, it's a matter of civic duty, rather than making it a career.**
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**

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 **Oppose, mostly because of games played with voter registrations and party affiliation.**
 - 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**

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. **Oppose. Taxpayer dollars going to candidates could be a violation of taxpayer's beliefs. It's a situation similar to Janus v. AFSCME, where someone may not want to support a candidate that opposes their own beliefs.**
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**
7. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits and reduce them even further from

registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state. **Support**

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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. Transparency and accountability are two of my fundamental principles.

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. Transparency and accountability are two of my fundamental principles.**

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. Transparency and accountability are critical in all aspects of government. This should be true for all public employees.**

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. **Strongly support.**

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

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. I am strongly in favor of localizing many more government decisions and funding, including eliminating unfunded mandates, so that local communities can make the decisions most relevant to their citizens.**

14. How would you seek to further restore the public's trust in government? What other steps would you take to expand transparency of state government, including the Executive Chamber?

My Open Government initiative should increase transparency in government. Read more about my Digital Government policy, including Open Government, on www.larrysharpe.com/policy.

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15. How do you view the budget process with respect to timeliness, effectiveness, fairness, and public accountability? What improvements, if any, would you make?

The state should not be picking winners and losers, we actually favor a similar process to Arizona with their charitable tax credit. As far as other budgets, fat needs to be trimmed from the budget, NY has some of the worst waste, and we will start with the education system, making it better while saving money.

16. Further to your responses to questions 5, 6, and 7, related to campaign finance, in the previous section, what is your view about measures to limit the role of money in elections and politics?

Unfortunately money is needed to wage an effective campaign, but our campaign has done a lot with less money. Money buys ads, media exposure, travel, and pays for key campaign workers with expertise. However, as with everything else in government, transparency and accountability are critical.

If elected, would you set an example on campaign finance reform by voluntarily (even unilaterally) limiting the size of campaign contributions you receive by an amount significantly less than the current limit, should reforms not be enacted? If not, why not?

Even with the limit, third parties struggle to raise money, so our campaign has been run on small contributions. It would level the playing field, but donor limits can hurt third parties, while the Democrats and Republicans can “bundle” contributions anyway, due to their large donor bases, to get around campaign finance limits via SuperPACs.

17. What is your view of the state's current financial situation? Are there specific programs or revenue sources that you would consider increasing, decreasing, eliminating or creating? How will you deal with the recent federal tax law changes that limit the tax deductibility of state income and property taxes to \$10,000?

The state's current financial situation is pretty bad, NY is running at about a 4 billion dollar deficit, and yet keeps spending money, without anything to show for it. The Buffalo Billion scandal and other projects around the state don't seem to actually improve anything, tend to fail spectacularly, and are rife with scandal and corruption. We have proposed revenue sources ranging from naming bridges and tunnels to leasing freight time on the MTA subway system. As far as the federal tax limits, we'd like to offset that burden by lowering property taxes in NY and giving a chance to put income taxes towards charity at a one-to-one ratio (see wedobetter.org/).

18. What would be your approach to education? How would you ensure the provision of funding needed to ensure a sound basic education under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decisions to all of New York's school districts? What is your view on the use of standardized tests?

We need a complete and bold change to our failing education system. My K-10 program gives students flexibility in both how and when they use their final 2 years of state-funded education. They can apply their 2-year credit anytime within 10 years of graduation and use those funds for many different types of additional education such as "college prep" which is similar to the current final 2 years of high school, trade school, or college. Graduates who are not ready to use those 2 years right at age 16 can directly enter the workforce, giving them an opportunity to learn some work skills, start to gauge their interests, and help out our lower wage needs, since they will be working their first job while still living at home. This type of flexible use of funds is very similar to the GI Bill and the German education model.

Additionally, I will remove all standardized testing until upper grades. In earlier years, standardized testing is a poor way to measure teacher or student progress and only makes some students feel dumb. I will also give block foundation grants to school districts (e.g., a specific dollar amount per student), rather than the complex, convoluted and outdated formula currently used.

Finally, I will eliminate the NYS Board of Regents. This entity provides only increased costly administrative requirements that reduce the spending that can be applied towards teachers and students.

I am not opposed to teachers using any methods that work; I am opposed to mandating them to use specific methods of pedagogy. Reliance upon standardized tests hinders teachers from practicing their profession. I would rather teachers teach.

19. How do you plan to address the systemic failures of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and New York City's transportation infrastructure? What is your view of congestion pricing, both in general and as a source of revenue?

My full MTA plan incorporates most of Andy Byford's plan, except we change the order of work around, cut construction overhead (by reducing setup and teardown), and brings in revenue via leasing the lines for freight at night. Without increasing one additional dollar of taxpayer or rider fees, my plan generates new revenue, allows expansion beyond New York City, reduces truck congestion and pollution, modernizes the MTA infrastructure, and will increase the flow of goods between Upstate and Downstate.

See: <http://www.larrysharpe.com/policy>

20. What is your plan for ensuring that New York State's economy is effectively positioned in the years ahead to create economic opportunity and address income inequality, and with regard to the growth of the upstate economy?

Income inequality isn't an issue that is easily understood, the economics regarding it are counter-intuitive, I have a number of plans to make NY friendly for small businesses and farmers, the economic growth engine of our state. I will create more opportunity with my K-10 education plan, and I have innovative plans to generate new revenue without always assuming the taxpayer needs to shoulder that cost. And through transparency and accountability, we will stop wasting money in NY. I talk about all of these innovative ideas at my town hall and other voter events. I encourage everyone to get to one of my events so we can discuss any of these issues in person.

21. What is your view of recent federal policies as they affect New York? What should New York's Governor do, going forward, to address those issues?

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.

This is a quite non-specific question. Generally there are so many federal policies hurting New Yorkers, ranging from health care and insurance policies to regulations on dairy farmers killing farming in NY. I have many of our policy positions online at <http://www.larrysharpe.com/policy>

Just a few examples of issues that I have taken major positions on are Education (Federal funds come with strings, that hurt NY), drug policy (treating substance abuse issues as a medical issue, not a criminal justice one), legal cannabis, and helping farmers using our Farm Freedom plan, which is similar to Wyoming's.

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

In addition to evaluating stances on the issues above, Citizens Union also assesses candidates on their current campaign promises and goals, and how they intend to approach them.

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. Making NYS a place where people want to stay by eliminating State income tax, lowering property taxes, boldly transforming our education system, and supporting exciting new industries that NYS currently tries to crush, such as cannabis and cryptocurrencies.**
- 2. Supporting all of your Constitutional rights all of the time, including neutering then fighting for repeal of SAFE act.**
- 3. Localization (putting more control into the hands of counties and towns and eliminating unfunded mandates).**
- 4. Innovative funding and maintenance plans for infrastructure across NYS including MTA.**
- 5. Criminal Justice and Family Court Reform**

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.

There are three pillars to shining a light on and reducing corruption. Corruption will always arise, but there is far less place for it to hide and it can be exposed and ended much quicker when we apply fundamental principles of transparency, accountability, and, simplicity.

First, our spending is far too complex, which means that it's hard to even know whether your tax dollars for specific items are going to where they are supposed to. If the state is collecting tax dollars for a specific purpose, then at a minimum, tax payers should be clear that the money is being used for what it was intended. I will have an Office of Transparency to immediately ensure that

Second, right now we have boards, commissions and agencies with no clear leader, leaving us wide open to out of control and misappropriated spending. I will ensure that every government entity has a clear leader who is responsible for how much that entity spends and for the results of that spending.

Finally, we have a culture of government in NYS that is so complex and with policies that amount to our government "bribing" businesses with taxpayer dollars, giving some, but not all, businesses a competitive edge, that it is a petri dish for corruption. As just one example, I will end the Regional Economic Development Corporations immediately.

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