

# 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: Ross Barkan

Party Affiliation(s): Age: 28

Education: B.A. SUNY Stony Brook M.A. NYU

Office Sought/District: State Senate District 22

Occupation/Employer: Journalist

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

*City Hall and national politics investigative journalist and columnist, former public school teacher*

## **Campaign Contact Information**

Campaign Manager Name: Additional Staff Contact:

Address: 307 82 Street

Telephone: Fax:

Website: rossbarkan.com Email: [ross@rossbarkan.com](mailto:ross@rossbarkan.com) Twitter: @rossbarkan Facebook: rossbarkannyc If elected, which legislative conference will you join

(e.g., Republican, Democrat, other)? Democrat

## 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:

## 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. YES Early voting b. YES No-excuse absentee voting c. YES Election Day voter registration d. YES Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief e. YES Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out f. YES Consolidated state and federal primaries g. YES Electronic poll books  
a. **Support**/Oppose b. **Support**/Oppose c. **Support**/Oppose d. **Support**/Oppose  
e. **Support**/Oppose f. **Support**/Oppose 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.

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As an investigative journalist and columnist who has exposed political corruption in New York State, I understand firsthand just how much more needs to be done to make our state a transparent, functioning place. I am a strong supporter of the public financing of elections, drastically reforming the BOE, and bringing sunlight to the operations of NYS government. I would be honored to have the endorsement of Citizens Union, which is the good government seal of approval voters know and respect. We need to combat corruption and clean up government. That's my solemn vow.

### 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. Get money out of politics. Bring the public financing of elections statewide, close the LLC loophole, and limit the influence of big donors.
2. Pass the New York Health Act
3. Give New York City as much local control as possible: repeal the Urstadt law and let our city government determine our destiny
4. Pass GENDA, Dream Act, Liberty Act, and reform our broken criminal justice system
5. Strengthen and expand rent control and rent stabilization programs

#### 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.

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

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As a journalist who has covered corruption in Albany, I understand firsthand how much unethical behavior and law-breaking can damage a democracy. I promise to operate with the utmost transparency and govern by the letter and spirit of the law. I will not mix politics and government. I will fight for a stronger independent body to hold legislators accountable. JCOPE doesn't go nearly far enough.