



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: Robert Jackson

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Party Affiliation(s): Democrat, WFP

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Age: 67

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Education:

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NYC Public Schools; BA, SUNY, New Paltz

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Office Sought/District:

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State Senate

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Occupation/Employer:

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Public official, candidate

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Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

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President, Community School Board 6 (CSB6), Co-founder, Campaign for Fiscal Equity; City Councilmember (2002 – 2013); Co-Chair, City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus; Chair, City Council Education Committee; District Leader

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

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**Campaign Contact Information**

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Campaign Manager Name: Sara Newman

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Additional Staff Contact: Richard Fife

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Address: Jackson for Senate 2018, PO Box 765, New York, NY 10033

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Telephone: 646-713-0862

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Fax:

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Website: VoteRobertJackson.com

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Email: Robert@VoteRobertJackson.com

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Twitter: @RJackson\_NYC

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Facebook: @VoteRobertJackson

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If elected, which legislative conference will you join (e.g., Republican, Democrat, other)? Democrat, without a deal, without a doubt

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## I. AFFIRMATIONS

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

7. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits and reduce them even further from registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> 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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> 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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> 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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> 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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
12. Empower the attorney general to investigate and prosecute election law malfeasance and cases of public corruption.	<input type="checkbox"/> Support / <input type="checkbox"/> 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 / <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose*
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- **Because Mayoral Control has not included “accountability, transparency, parent engagement, and democratic participation” and am skeptical in ever would.**

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.

We need to reform Albany and I applaud Citizens Union's efforts to lead the way. It starts with taking money out of politics – including reducing contribution limits, eliminating the LLC loophole and establishing a campaign finance system that open up the process. We need real election reform – including making it easier for people to vote and ending the systematic voter suppression that we have here in New York that has resulted in some of the lowest voter turnout. We must reform voter redistricting and get back to voters choosing their representative rather than the representatives choosing their voters. And we must get rid of three men in a room and empower all legislators. And we must reform the budget system so money is going to meet the real challenges are state faces. I am ready to go to Albany and be part of the solution and look forward to working with you to make it happen.

This Primary is symbolic of so much that is wrong with our elections and needs to be fixed: there are multiple primaries this year, with Federal offices in June and State in September, confusing voters and suppressing turnout; early September is a terrible time for a primary, mixed in with the Jewish holidays, September 11<sup>th</sup> remembrances, the end of summer, start of school and this year having to move it to a Thursday to avoid direct conflict with Rosh Hashanah; the District is heavily gerrymandered by the Republicans winding down from the upper tip of Manhattan to 26<sup>th</sup> Street, in many areas the eastern border shifting block-to-block; and the incumbent was able to win by under 300 votes two years ago by using a finance deal that funneled \$539,000 illegally (according to State Elections Unit and the Supreme Court) from the Independence Party to her campaign. We need to change all those things to make it easier for people to vote and harder for money to influence the outcome.

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### 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. Continue my lifelong leadership for better schools, specifically fighting to make sure NYC finally receives all the money mandated in the CFE agreement.

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2. Work to elect a real Democratic majority to pass progressive legislation that has passed the Assembly and died in the Senate.

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3. Protect and create affordable housing – working to repeal the Urstadt Law and return home rule to NYC; repeal vacancy destabilization so we don't lose more units, close the "preferential rent" loophole and protect tenants.

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4. Campaign finance and election reform – working to establish state system modeled on NYC system, to reduce influence of money.

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5. Provide great constituent service.

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#### 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.

*I will conduct my political affairs the same way I did for 12 years on the City Council – with honesty, integrity and never holding an outside job. Being an elected official is truly an honor. It is public service – literally serving the public. I take that trust very seriously.*

*Growing up in upper Manhattan, we didn't have much. I could never have dreamed that one day I would serve on the City Council and be a candidate for State Senate. I was able to succeed through hard work, a good education and the help of people in the community.*

*I have worked to give every child this same chance to succeed. I worked as a labor representative and then as a Community School Board President. I got into politics as an outgrowth of my work to improve our schools.*

*I look forward to continuing my work for the people as State Senator. I am ready to lead a movement to take money out of politics and to re-engage people in the electoral process. I will never let the people down.*

*I ask for your support in this Primary. Just as important, I want you with me when I become State Senator next January -- providing ideas, letting me know what needs to be done and telling me when you disagree. Together, we can make a difference for families today, and for generations to come.*

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

## We need real election reform

ROBERT JACKSON, Former City Council member and candidate for State Senate | 4/28/2016, 12:42 p.m.

<http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2016/apr/28/we-need-real-election-reform/>

Last week's presidential primary exposed some potential serious Board of Elections problems in the management of voter lists and the conducting of the election. However, the real electoral problem in New York State goes far deeper. New York has some of the worst laws in the country and an overall anti-voter attitude. This combination has resulted in low voter participation. In fact, New York has the fourth worst turnout in the country.

A prime example of the problem is New York State Legislature's failure to consolidate this year's primaries on one date or, at most, two dates. Whereas this week Maryland and Pennsylvania voted on their presidential, federal, legislative and local contests on one day, New York will have three separate primaries—last week for president, in June for Congress and in September for the State Legislature. Having three primaries lowers voter participation, wastes more than \$50 million and contributes to overall voting dysfunction.

The failure of state senators to consolidate the federal and state primaries is for their own political benefit and so that they can run for two offices simultaneously, which not only wastes millions of dollars but also is an insult to all voters. It's time for politicians to realize elections shouldn't be designed to make it easier for themselves, but rather easier for voters to participate.

State leaders must put aside their self-serving political agendas, recognize today's lifestyle realities and make it easier for every citizen to vote. Although many here are quick and correct to blast other states passing voter ID laws that make it more difficult for voters to cast a ballot, not enough is being said or done about New York's laws that suppress our vote and disproportionately hurt minority voters. We immediately need to enact voter friendly policies and other reforms that encourage voter participation.

More specifically, New York State should do the following:

- Establish early voting and no-excuse absentee voting in New York State. Two-thirds of the states now offer some sort of early voting in which voters may visit an official site and cast a vote in person days or weeks before Election Day without offering an excuse for not being able to vote on the officially designated day.
- Consolidate the state and federal primary to the third week in June. Having separate primaries is of no benefit to voters, increases confusion, decreases voting and wastes millions of dollars.
- Lower signature requirements and utilize less burdensome witness signature requirements to encourage greater competition and discourage nuisance legal challenges. Although there should be some requirement to get on the ballot, it shouldn't be a legal labyrinth that only benefits election lawyers and political machines.
- Allow Election Day voter registration. Fifteen states now have this reform, which increases voter turnout and eliminates arbitrary deadlines that cut off registration just when voters are engaged.
- Replace existing election governance boards with professional administration and eliminate the current system of bipartisan duplication.

New York State should be the capital of democracy. And we can be, if Albany gets beyond its old-time politics and shows a real commitment to making our system the best in the country by increasing the opportunity for all New Yorkers to vote and making our voting the easiest, friendliest and most accountable anywhere.

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