



Candidate Questionnaire
Local Candidates Committee
New York City Council Elections 2017

Citizens Union appreciates your response to the following questionnaire related to policy issues facing New York City and our interest in reforming city and state government. Please return the questionnaire to us as soon as possible, and no later than June 28th. Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for the New York City Council, 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: ERIN HUSSEIN
Party Affiliation(s): DEMOCRAT Age: 47
Education: J.D. COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL; B.A., ENGLISH, COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Office Sought (including district): CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2
Occupation/Employer: WRITER / HOMEMAKER

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement:

PRE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, STEWART TENANTS CORP.; CENTRAL VILLAGE COOP ALLIANCE
(Please feel free to affix any additional information such as a résumé, campaign brochure, or issue statements.)

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: ERIN HUSSEIN Additional Staff Contact:
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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 of being considered for Citizens Union endorsements.)

Voting and Elections Reform

1. A non-partisan election system would break the lock the Democratic party has on who is on the ballot and would result in the election of the candidate with the broadest support, regardless of party. This would be a significant improvement in Districts where there is a large minority of Independent and Republican voters.
2. The cost savings alone is reason enough for IRV, but it also important to have candidates elected with the highest possible number of voters.
3. A volunteer municipal poll worker program would increase civic engagement in all elections by raising awareness of elections and the issues facing our City. I believe this would result in more voting and more voter registration.
4. Performance metrics will give everyone interested in our elections, including elected officials and good government groups, better information. We cannot have reform without understanding the magnitude of the problem and whether current programs are successful.
5. A law brought into effect by voter referendum should not be subject to being overturned by the votes of the 51 people on the City Council.

Campaign Finance Reform

6. Money is fungible, and the concept that public matching money is funneled into groups that lobby our government is insane. We are taking public money that could otherwise fund higher priorities, such as education, and giving it to entities who then work on behalf of private entities to change the policies of our City, in effect subsidizing those private entities because the lobbyist can charge less for its services.
7. The current match system rewards candidates who collect larger contributions and contributions from people outside of the City and State. Given the huge effect campaign contributions have on who is eventually elected, the matching system should instead reward those who collect smaller contributions from those who would be actually impacted by the candidate if elected.

City Council Reform

8. The Legislative Bill Drafting Unit is definitely a huge step in the right direction. Any bill a Council member believes would benefit the City should be drafted and debated, and the Unit has reduced the preferential treatment sometimes given to bill drafting before 2014. However, I believe New York City should have a completely nonpartisan bill drafting process such as the New York State Legislature has. The ultimate shape of legislation is strongly influenced by the initial draft, which makes choices right out of the gate as to how to frame issues. The words chosen to include in a bill are crucial to the bill's interpretation and

implementation, and those words should be chosen completely without partisan bias. The argument that individual Council members should continue to have the power to decide what language is used in initial drafts of bills because they have developed expertise over time does not hold up given term limits.

9.
 - a. A committee staffer for each committee would reduce the workload on the district office staff of the committee chair while increasing institutional memory for that committee. It would also give those in the public who want to contact that committee an independent contact.
 - b. This would cut down on competing hearings being scheduled at the same time and enable committee chairs to attend hearings where their legislation is being considered.
10. Voters need to be able to evaluate whether a Councilmember may have interests which might bias the Councilmember.
11. (Blank)
12. I would support this so long as there is a floor on the level of funding for each district.
13. I would always err on the side of greater transparency.
14. The voters voted for term limits of eight years.
15. Actions designed to influence an outcome are by definition lobbying and should be reported as such.

Public Safety and Oversight of Police Misconduct

16-22. I believe that virtually all members of the NYPD are honorable servants who discharge their duties in the best interest of community safety. Sadly, there are a few who are not. Greater oversight and transparency will lead to greater trust, remove bad apples more quickly and prevent senseless injury and death to innocent New Yorkers.

Budget Reform

23. I believe that entities such as the COIB and the public advocate should have independent budgeting because the proper execution of their functions depends upon independence from the Mayor and the Council. It is hard to police adequately when you have to go hat in hand for funding, particularly when the Mayor and public advocate might be from different political parties. I am, however, uncomfortable generally with the concept of a proscribed amount of budgeting so would not extend that to borough presidents or community boards as I would expect the Councilmembers representing the same areas would fight for them.

24. Particularly now when we are facing the possibility of receiving less from the State and Federal governments, it is important for the City Council to understand at a more granular level which programs they are funding. The City budget represents the priorities the Council sets for the City, and the Council must have as much transparency as possible to decide how to fund those priorities.
25. This would be very useful in years where there is a weakening of revenue projections in order to allow stakeholders to adjust their expectations and ensure a balanced budget.

Land Use and Community Board Reform

26. It is hard for community boards, whose members are largely volunteers, to evaluate and make the right decisions on land use issues they continually deal with if they don't have access to expert urban planners. The developers seeking approval of the community boards certainly do. Every inch of space in the City is precious and should be used in the right way to balance quality of life of residents and the right to make a return on investment, and expert advice is necessary for good decisions. It is also crucial that community board members not be handpicked by borough presidents.
27. I support as much transparency as possible in the selection of community board members as well as casting as wide a net as possible for applicants. The work of community boards is too vital to the future of our communities for anything less.

Constitutional Convention

28. I was initially against a Constitutional Convention because I feared that outside money would pour into New York State to influence the outcome of issues such as abortion and the right to clean water. However, now that the State Legislative session has ended without their undertaking electoral reform, I believe that we must have a Constitutional Convention. Our elected officials are elected not so much by the people they represent as by the party machines, and civic engagement in our elections is at an incredible low.
29. I am a founder of NYC Indivisible, one of the Indivisible resistance groups that have formed since the November election. I also communicate and meet regularly with other group leaders. I would discuss the need for a Constitutional Convention with other group leaders so that together we could work to educate our members about and campaign in favor of the Convention. This could take the form of social media, rallies, opinion pieces and town halls. I also will campaign actively for a Convention in my District in the time between the primary

and the general elections, using the grassroots communication program I am developing for my election.

30. In my District, District 2, where we face rampant commercial overdevelopment, we are fighting for contextual rezoning to favor in-scale residential buildings rather than out of scale commercial buildings including hotels. The Mayor has flat out refused to consider this and is instead pushing for our District to become the end point of Silicon Alley. This will destroy the delicate residential balance of the Village and put incredible pressure on our small local businesses. Humanscale NYC reviewed the Mayor's campaign finance filings and discovered that 54% of his contributions have come from real estate interests, including developers who have purchased plots in the area we are fighting to rezone and investors in the proposed Tech Hub. This is information that should be broadcast far and wide, but its dissemination depends on the reach of a small land use group. The online campaign finance searchable database is a wonderful tool for those with the time and inclination to search it and digest the information it contains. I would like to see a program where contribution information is disaggregated by industry and reported publicly in the Voter Guide as well as major NYC news outlets. We also need further campaign finance reform, such as full matching and reducing the amount spent on campaigns.

II Campaign Promises

1. I will not vote in favor of the Tech Hub at 124 East 14th Street in Manhattan unless the Mayor agrees to the rezoning of the area from 5th Avenue to Third Avenue as proposed by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.
2. I will push for a full public hearing and a vote on the Small Business Jobs Survival Act.
3. I will support the desegregation process already begun by Community Education Council District 1, including the move to the Renzulli schoolwide enrichment model.
4. I will support the extension of restorative justice into all classrooms in the City.
5. I will work to make it easier for children with special needs to access services without their parents' having to hire an attorney.

III Ethical Representation of Constituents

District 2 has suffered through many years of low constituent services, particularly in the areas outside of the Lower East Side. One of the biggest areas of concern has been in land use, where both our current and preceding Councilmembers voted in favor of projects such as 51 Astor Place and the NYU 2031 expansion against vehement opposition by the communities after securing downzoning of the blocks surrounding

their District offices. People I have met in District 2 have no faith in the desire or ability of the Councilmember to take into account the needs of the District and are eager for a change in leadership. Nevertheless, the Democratic machine is supporting the status quo.

I propose to bring that change in leadership through more legislation, greater visibility and greater accountability. In order to do this, I and my staff will be easily accessible and highly responsive.

I understand that my job as a Councilmember will be to know the issues facing the residents of District 2 and their communities. Knowing the issues will give me the power to contact City agencies and services and advocate on a larger scale. It also will alert me to the need for legislation to protect our neighbors.

I will be in a public space in each quarter of the District once a week at varying times (morning, afternoon, evening) to meet constituents and ask and answer questions. The proximity of the District to City Hall makes this possible.

Once a month, I will hold an evening town hall where all residents of the District can meet me and ask questions about anything, including my expense and capital funding decisions. They can tell me they support (or don't) legislation I am proposing in City Hall and let me know if they feel that something is slipping through the cracks.

Beginning in January, I will call together a coalition of local stakeholders in each neighborhood (roughly a 20-block area) to discuss what they want their neighborhood to be and how my office can support that through the 197a process or other zoning requests.

My staff will seek out and aggregate information useful to residents (community board meetings and openings, zoning and permit requests, DOT plans, street fairs) and use social media platforms (Facebook, Meetup, Twitter, Slack and others) to enable real-time information. Residents will be able to post question and expect an answer.

I will also introduce participatory budgeting to District 2.

Signature of Candidate: *Eric Hruska*

Date: *6/27/17*

I. POLICY QUESTIONS

Please state whether you support or oppose the following reform measures, and feel free to elaborate in the space provided at the end or on additional paper.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

1. What is your position with respect to eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system in which all candidates and all voters participate in the first round and the top two candidates advance to the second round?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
4. What is your position on requiring the Board of Elections to report performance metrics to the City Council that conform to the Mayor's Management Report?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
5. What is your position on modifying the City Charter to require that laws enacted by referendum only be changed through approval by the voters?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

6. What is your position on prohibiting participants in the city's campaign finance program from using public matching funds to purchase strategic campaign consulting services from firms that also provide lobbying services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
7. What is your position on increasing the Campaign Finance Board's public matching grants from a partial match of 55% to a full match of funds raised (Int. 1130-A)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose

CITY COUNCIL REFORM

8. How do you feel the reformed bill drafting process is going under the enacted 2014 Council Rules Reforms and do you think we need a more independent process similar to New York State Legislature's bill drafting commission?

9. What is your position on the following proposals enabling Council committees to function more effectively and independently of the speaker:	
a. Should committee chairs have the ability to hire at least one committee staffer?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
d. Now that committee chair stipends have been eliminated what is your position on reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
11. When the Quadrennial Compensation Commission is reconvened, what is your position on requiring that any future increase in councilmember compensation only apply prospectively to the following term?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
13. What is your position on increasing transparency of discretionary funding by requiring the list of capital and expense funds and their sponsors be provided to Councilmembers and the public three days in advance of any vote, and expanding the online searchable database of expense funds to include all capital fund recipients and applicants?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms?	Support / <u>Oppose</u>
15. What is your position on making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of Speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose

PUBLIC SAFETY AND OVERSIGHT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

16. What is your position on establishing the Commission to Combat Police Corruption (CCPC) as a permanent commission in the City Charter while empowering the CCPC to issue subpoenas?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
17. What is your position on enhancing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) authority to initiate an investigation into reported or known incidents of police misconduct without receipt of a formal complaint?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
18. What is your position on granting the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) with the authority to prosecute officers found guilty of lying during CCRB investigations?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
19. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
20. What is your position on requiring the Police Commissioner to explain divergence from NYPD trial judge and CCRB disciplinary recommendations and to make the explanation public?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose
21. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?	<u>Support</u> / Oppose

22. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race? <i>same as 21?</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
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BUDGET REFORM

23. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. the borough presidents?	Support <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Oppose
b. Conflicts of Interest Board?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
c. the public advocate?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
d. community boards?	Support / <input checked="" type="radio"/> Oppose
24. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining and limiting units of appropriation?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
25. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY BOARD REFORM

26. What is your position on designating urban planners for use by community boards and requiring borough president's report to the Council the manner in which they advertise and make community board appointments?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
27. What is your position on establishing a formal standardized and transparent process for community board appointments including written applications, interviews of candidates, and filling vacancies within 30 days?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

28. In November, voters in New York will be asked whether they wish to hold a constitutional convention to amend the New York State Constitution. What is your position on holding such a convention?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Support / <input type="radio"/> Oppose
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29. If you support the constitutional convention, what actions, if any, will you take to ensure that it takes place? If you oppose the convention, what will you do to defeat it?
