



Candidate Questionnaire
Local Candidates Committee
New York City Council Elections 2017

Candidate Questionnaire

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: Justin Brannan

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Age: 38

Education: Fordham University and College of Staten Island

Office Sought (including district): City Council seat in District 43

Occupation/Employer: Full-time candidate

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Chief of Staff to Councilman Vincent Gentile, founder of Bay Ridge Cares 501(c)(3) and the Bay Ridge Democratic Club

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Luke Strong

Additional Staff Contact:

Address: 8115 3rd Ave

Telephone: 917-922-1937

Fax:

Website: www.justin2017.com

Email: JustinBayRidge@gmail.com

Twitter: @JustinBrannan

Facebook: JustinBrannan2017

Affirmations

Have you completed required campaign finance filings?

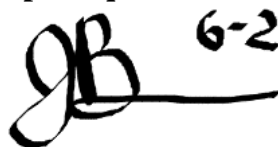
YES

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

YES

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

Signature of Candidate:

 JB 6-28-17

Date:

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?

Support

2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices?

Support

3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Support

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)?

Support

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?

I believe making government work is really a cornerstone of progressive values – I believe government has an important role leveling the playing field, giving everyone a fair shot, and helping those who really need it. But if people can't connect or don't have access to services, then we're not making those values real. Therefore, I believe that the more we take politics out of the day to day operations of our city the better our city will function not only within the confines of the council itself, but for everyday New Yorkers. I think that the reforms enacted by the council are better than the rules which the council used to follow, but the reforms are very far from perfect. I am in support of a more independent process, similar to the State Legislature's bill drafting commission, because at the end of the day I don't think that politics should ever get in the way of making the city function more efficiently, and a process which gets in the way of good, fair and efficient policy making is one we should do our best to get rid of.

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?

Support

b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs?

Support

c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members?

Support

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?

Support

10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income?

Support

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?

Support

12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding?

Support

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?

Support

14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms?

Oppose

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?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Support

19. What is your position on reinstating the zero tolerance penalty for false official statements by public officers?

Support

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?

Support

21. What is your position on requiring the NYPD to publish a regular report of use of force incidents with data disaggregated by race?

Support

22. What is your position on granting the CCRB authority to prosecute officers who lie under oath during the course of their investigations?

Support

BUDGET REFORM

23. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for:

a. the borough presidents?

Support

b. Conflicts of Interest Board?

Support

c. the public advocate?

Support

d. community boards?

Support

24. What is your position on making the budget process more transparent by clearly defining and limiting units of appropriation?

Support

25. What is your position on release of revenue projections (other than property taxes) prior to Council hearings on the Executive budget?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Support

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?

Oppose

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?

In the current political climate I don't think we should be opening up Pandora's Box. While I support governmental changes to accommodate new policies and adapt to changing times, a Constitutional Convention could roll back hard fought rights like the right to collectively bargain and organize a union or the right to marry whom you choose. There is a process in place to make amendments to the constitution without resorting to electing delegates based on gerrymandered senate district lines or opening up all the progress we've made to being undone or rolled back. I believe that New Yorkers have the right to vote whichever way they think is right when it comes to this issue, the reason why I oppose such a convention is because a constitutional convention can open up the entire state's constitution to a hap-hazardous environment and could ultimately have long lasting effects which hurt every New Yorker, which is something that my campaign opposes. If there are changes needed to our state's constitution then those changes can happen specifically through the state legislature and is something that I would tell my constituents who are considering to vote for a convention. There are existing mechanisms to enact lasting change that are less likely to invite large expenditures by special interests to create chaos and potentially great harm.

30. Last year, Citizens Union helped craft and push for the enactment of a law that placed political contribution limits and disclosure requirements on nonprofits that are formed by, or affiliated with, elected officials, which helped prevent some significant features of an emerging "pay-to-play" culture in New York City. Do you have any other ideas to further limit such a culture and create a better environment where contributions, either personal or political do not unduly influence the actions of elected officials?

The biggest concern when it comes to pay-to-play is the amount of access moneyed individuals get to an elected official. One way we can at least start to reduce the effects of pay-to-play culture in our politics is something as simple as keeping public logs of visitors to an official's office during their tenure in office. If a lobbyist is meeting with an official the community members have the right to know how often and how long. This is a very basic step, but it is one which will increase transparency and trust in our legislative process. We could also consider limitations on bundling of contribution - in particular from those with business before the city.

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.

One of the most important issues in my campaign is guaranteeing that our communities and our community leaders have the resources necessary to better their communities in ways that only they can. That is why I started Bay Ridge Cares, people within the communities at a local level have the most knowledge and capability to help those in need.

II.

CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS (PAST AND CURRENT)

In addition to evaluating stances on the issues above, Citizens Union also assesses incumbents on how well they kept the promises made to voters during the previous election. As an elected official who is seeking re-election,

- what were the top five promises you made to your constituents when you ran for your current seat and what progress has been made in keeping those promises, and**
- what are the top five promises you are making to 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 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

1. Fix our subways. The 43rd Council District sits about 7 miles from Manhattan and yet people who live in other states get to work in Manhattan faster than we do. It is absolutely absurd. It's already hard enough for hard-working families to move around this city. Between the long commutes and fare hikes, we are simply not getting the service we need. The people who suffers most from a lack of reliable public transportation are working families, the middle class, and people living in poverty, students and seniors. The people who do not suffer from a lack of reliable public transportation are the people who make the decisions regarding public transportation.

2. Build more schools. Invest in our schools so that our children have the best possible tools at their disposal to help them in their future careers. We have a crisis of overcrowding and often under serviced schools - in particular within schools with a large ESL population. There aren't any schools in District 20 that aren't at least 140% overcrowded.

3. Support small businesses. As a small business owner I know many of the hurdles that face long term struggling businesses. Help local small businesses within our community in order to have an economy which works for the everyday worker.

4. As with most parts of the city, we have a large population of individuals who would like to age in place, and are entitled to world class services and the dignity to do so. Our senior centers deserve increased support and funding and we need to find ways to invest further in transportation services and access to benefits such as SCRIE.

5. Promote a more open NYPD so that any mistrust between the department and the community can be abridged.

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 public trust. With the corruption conviction of recent state 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 will 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 restore the public trust in your district.

I have always called this community home. This is where my wife and I own an art school for children and where my mom has been an educator for over 30 years. Helping others is my passion and with your support, I hope to continue doing that in an official capacity. Now more than ever, we need to elect people with guts who aren't afraid to stand up for what's right. I was lucky to have parents who raised me with a strong work ethic and an equally strong backbone. I got my impatience for bureaucracy from years as an activist and I know how to cut through red tape to get things done. If I am fortunate enough to be elected to represent the community I have grown up in and loved my whole life, I promise each and every one of my constituents that I will go to City Hall with an open mind and a desire to serve everyone. I will have my campaign office open to each and every caller and concerned citizen in order to more perfectly represent and defend the interests of my peers - this includes instituting weekend and weeknight office hours. I will hold regular town halls and attend meetings to face my constituents each and every day so they will know me and I will know their concerns. This district is a diverse and inspiring place to call home, and my job is to ensure that each and every individual has access to my office and representation at council.