

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 issues 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: Mary Silver

Party Affiliation(s): Democrat

Age: 58

Education: BA (English and Philosophy) Hofstra University, JD and PhD (English and American Literature) NYU

Office Sought (including district): City Council, District 2

Occupation/Employer: Attorney

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: PTA President, Community Education Council, Community 6, Community Advisory Board 30th Street Men's Shelter

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Kelsey Hamilton, 603-359-066, kelsey@marysilvernyc.com

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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: Mary Silver

Date: July 4, 2017

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 nonpartisan 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** / Oppose
2. What is your position on instituting Instant Runoff Voting for all citywide offices and for all special elections for city offices? **Support** / Oppose
3. What is your position on creating a voluntary municipal poll worker program to supplement poll worker recruitment by district leaders? **Support** / 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? **Support** / 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? **Support** / 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? **Support** / 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)? **Support** / 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?

The 2014 initiative to allow more independent bill drafting was an important change, but did not go far enough. The City Council would benefit from a truly independent bill drafting service.

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** / Oppose
 - b. Should committee hearings and votes be scheduled at the direction of the chairs? **Support** / Oppose
 - c. Should committees be able to issue subpoenas by a vote of their members? **Support** / 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? **Support** / Oppose
10. What is your position on greater disclosure of councilmembers' outside income? **Support** / 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? Support / Oppose
Other – do not support pay raises of any kind.
12. What is your position on ensuring a more equitable and needs-based distribution of discretionary funding? **Support** / 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? **Support** / Oppose
14. What is your position on extending term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms? Support / **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** / 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? **Support** / 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? **Support** / 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? **Support** / Oppose

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

BUDGET REFORM

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

I do not plan any public activity around the Constitutional Convention referendum. I am focused on my own election. I will continue to express my opposition to the Constitutional Convention because of its potential to undermine hard-earned pensions.

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?

I would support a ban on elected officials “bundling” funds or fundraising for other New York City campaigns if candidates would like to participate in the campaign Matching Funds Program.

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.

I am running for office as an extension of my work as an education advocate. Too often, our elected officials elect our electeds. That means that voters, and the issues that matter most, are pushed to the side. While I am running primarily to be advocate for public education, affordable housing, and to preserve a high quality of life in our neighborhoods, I have quickly learned that this process is not always open and accessible.

I support opening up the political process to voters through “open primaries”, easier voter registration, more early voting options, and a more straight-forward ballot petitioning process. I will support any measure to make our government more transparent and accessible to citizens.

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

As a candidate who presently does not hold elected office, what are your top five campaign promises you are making to the voters during this campaign for this position. If elected, Citizens Union will use these promises to evaluate your performance while in office, as well as to evaluate your candidacy in the future.

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 2017 CAMPAIGN PROMISES OR GOALS

1. I will work to reduce public school class sizes through increased staffing, and by aggressively pursuing new school sites.

2. New York City has some of the most segregated schools in the country. I will work to desegregate our public schools and create a more equitable system for all New York City children.

3. New York City is facing an affordability crisis. On the City Council, I will work to increase our affordable housing stock, limit rent increases, and ensure that seniors and young families can stay in their neighborhoods.

4. I promise to stand up against the Trump agenda. I am committed to maintaining our status as a sanctuary city and will resist any attempt to defund Planned Parenthood or undermine healthcare as a human right.

5. I pledge to support a high quality of life in our neighborhoods, from reducing construction noise at all hours, to even basic fixes like trashcans on every corner, my priority is service to the community and constituent services.

III. 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 am a proud participant in New York City's public campaign finance system, which has substantially reduced corrupting influences on city politics. Of course, there is much work to be done to reduce public cynicism about our local and state government.

Lobbyists have too much influence on local government – privileging those who can afford hired guns to have their way with city policy and tax dollars. I support a ban on lobbyists bundling campaign contributions, and comprehensive disclosure of lobbyists' contacts with elected officials.

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.