



Candidate Questionnaire

Local Candidates Committee

NYC Public Advocate Special Election 2019

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 January 3rd.** Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for New York City Public Advocate, and to issue our endorsement in the Special 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 publish returned questionnaires on our website, in printed voters directory, and in other appropriate venues. We thank you very much for your response.

Biographical Information

Candidate Name: Eric A. Ulrich

Party Affiliation(s): Common Sense Party (R-Registration) Age: 33

Education: BA, St. Francis College (CUNY) MPA, Baruch College

Office Sought: New York City Public Advocate

Occupation/Employer: NYC Councilmember District 32

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement: Elected to New York City Council in a special election in February 2009

Re-Elected to the council again in November 2009, 2013 and 2017. President of the Our Neighbors Civic Association of Ozone Park.

Candidate Cell Phone: 718-869-4920 www.ericulrich.nyc

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

Campaign Contact Information

Campaign Manager Name: Michael Fragin

Additional Staff Contact:

Address: 7120 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale NY 11385

Telephone:

Fax:

Website: www.ericulrich.nyc

Email:

Twitter: @eric_ulrich

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EricForNYC

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's endorsement.)

Signature of Candidate:

Date: 1/3/2019

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.

CITIZEN UNION ISSUES

1. What is your position with respect to eliminating party primaries and establishing a nonpartisan election system in which all candidates participate in the first round and the top two candidates advance to the second round? All registered voters regardless of party would be eligible to vote in both rounds.	Support Oppose
2. What is your position on instituting ranked choice voting in all elections for citywide office, including all special elections?	Support Oppose
3. 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
4. What is your position on establishing independent budgeting for: a. borough presidents? b. The Conflicts of Interest Board? c. The Public Advocate? d. community boards?	a. Support/Oppose b. Support/ Oppose c. Support/Oppose d. Support/Oppose

ISSUES OF CITYWIDE IMPORTANCE

5. How would you use the office of the Public Advocate to impact public policy to serve the broad public interest?
As New York City Public Advocate, I would first make sure that we serve New Yorkers according to its Charter mandate and be a check on the Mayor’s office and Mayoral agencies to ensure that all New Yorkers are getting the services and resources that they deserve. In instances where we see systemic failure to service New Yorkers, our office will call out the Mayor, issue reports, propose administrative solutions and legislation that not only fixes the problems but ensures the long term functionality and viability of each particular, service, program or agency.

6. What would be your most important legislative and non-legislative priorities as Public Advocate?

Our most important legislative priority will be to improve transparency, FOIL, and compliance with open government laws within the Mayor’s office and within all Mayoral agencies. All too often we find city hall, agencies and commissions avoiding scrutiny by exploiting legal loopholes or parsing word distinctions that ensure that the Mayor and commissioners avoid scrutiny that the law requires and that the public has a right to know about. All too often the process of finding out the truth takes years, and its time to tighten the FOIL process and ensure that the public’s right to know and access data and performance is part and parcel of governmental operations and is not simply an extra ad-on.

Our non-legislative priority will be to use the voice and “bully pulpit” given to the Public Advocate to continue Councilman Ulrich’s career -long pursuit to improve public transportation options in the outer borough’s. This includes working with the DOT and state agencies to improve bus services in Staten Island, repair infrastructure, continue the growth of alternative modes of transportation such as Ferry Services, bike-sharing, ride-sharing, pooling and other forms of transportation. Additionally, and most importantly, we intend monitor the MTA and not just to react to delays and poor service, but to ensure that repairs or being done on-time, on budget, and are producing the intended results. The city can not abide slow service, slow repairs, few alternatives and no transparency. We will hold everyone accountable for everything. Part and parcel of this would be to push to expand the powers of the office without adding additional funding by securing board positions on more city commissions and public authorities such as the MTA and the CUNY board of trustees.

7. What do you consider to be the three most important oversight functions of the Public Advocate?

1) Oversight of the Mayor's office and guaranteeing transparency and openness. When the Mayor and agencies evade FOIL laws, open government, and the rights of the press, the Public Advocate must step in to do everything possible to ensure FOILs and questions are answered in a timely fashion.

2) Oversight of City Agencies deliver direct services to city residents. Notably, the Public Advocate must be proactive with NYCHA, HPD, HRA, Finance, Consumer Affairs, SBA and the other agencies that interact with New Yorkers. We need to ensure that there is no red tape, ever.

3) Overseeing the agencies charged with Economic Development to guarantee that they are taking the concerns of the local communities are take seriously. Too often, we find that Community Boards are ignored, local concerns dismissed, and ULURP is avoided or not taken seriously.

Our office will end the top-down approach to development, work with all community boards and local stake holders to ensure that the Mayor's office even the Governor's office and ensure that they are not taking their concerns for granted.

8. The most recent Public Advocate has used litigation extensively, with mixed results, at least with regard to the Public Advocate's standing to bring a lawsuit. What is your view on the Public Advocate's use of litigation to attempt to force policy changes?

We will use litigation when appropriate. As a representative of the people, will maximize litigation in places where we will have legal standing to bring the lawsuit.

In particular, litigation is appropriate against city and state agencies that are not providing the services they are mandated to provide, or are not transparent in their own operations. Rather, than getting thrown out of court, in instances where the office's standing is questionable

the Public Advocate must work with the other actors in Government like the Attorney General to bring the appropriate lawsuit.

We will certainly use litigation, but be cognizant of legal standing first prior to filing.

9. What discrepancies, if any, do you see between services promised to New Yorkers and services rendered? For those listed please indicate your proposals for bringing policy closer to practice.

1. Public Transportation. Subways are a disaster, mobility in the outer boroughs is difficult, and residents of Staten Island are disconnected from the rest of the city and need expanded bus service. As a councilman I led the charge to create the Rockaway Ferry service and we need to expand and improve ferry services all round the city. Additionally, I have long supported ride-sharing, bike sharing, and other innovative forms of transportation and will work to bring them to the outer boroughs.

2. Parks and Recreation. As an outer borough resident and representative, I know how important our parks, beaches and coastal areas are. But failed de Blasio policies have left drug syringes strewn across parks in the Bronx and incompetence closed Rockaway Beaches last summer.

As Public Advocate, it will be my mission that Parks and Beaches from Coney Island to the Rockaways are open clean and available for all New Yorkers. Failed social experiments cannot put our children in harms way, and incompetence should not close beaches for no reason.

3. Affordable Housing. Due to space constraints, please see the affordable housing section of question 12 on page 5.

10. How would you approach the responsibilities of the Public Advocate regarding access to public information in monitoring the implementation of the city's Open Data Law?

As the Public Advocate, our office will apply the strictest of standards to ensure that all city agencies are not only complying with the law, but are doing so in a timely fashion. To accomplish this, we will designate a member of the office to serve as the New York's "Open Data Advocate" to ensure that all agencies are updating information to the open data portal in a timely fashion, and who will monitor FOIL requests to ensure that they are being complied with. There will be a hotline to this officer/advocate that will field complaints about lack of responsiveness or to deal with confusing responses or data dumps.

Moreover, we plan to monitor the full cost of data retention and foil production o ensure that not only is the city is not wasting money and is employing a system of 'best practices' on data retention so that the the general public is not having unnecessary costs placed upon its FOIL requests. Lastly, our office will work on legislation that improves upon email retention policies to prevent the use of personal email to avoid disclosure.

11. What specifically will you do as Public Advocate to ensure New York achieves a full and complete Census count in 2020?

We would work to ensure that every New Yorker is counted. All too often, NY suffers from a lack of adequate census counting and as a result, NYC loses representation and precious resources

This is a question of fact, "How many people live in New York City." We will use the office to make sure that everyone living in New York City is counted. Period. Part of this will be monitoring the operations of the newly appointed census officer, so that she can have access to data from agencies that indicate how many residents we have in the city. We can not simply rely on responses to questionnaires. We know how many students there are in schools and where they live. We should access driver license and tax records. Simply so we can arrive at the best possible answer to the question how many people live here.

12. How would you leverage the office of Public Advocate to address any of the following issues, if not discussed in answering previous questions:

- a. Affordable Housing
- b. Public Safety
- c. Public Transportation
- d. Health and Environment
- e. Economic Development
- f. Education

Many of these issues have been addressed in previous questions but we will address some of them here as well, and list first the issues that not been discussed yet.

Public Safety. 1) It is a travesty that the PBA still does not have a new contract despite the Mayor's emphasis on securing municipal labor contracts for all other city unions. We can't continue to be safe if we don't give our police their due, and take care of them the way they take care of us. The mayor's antagonistic posture with the police has poisoned this well and endangers all New Yorkers. We need to get the PBA a contract now. As Public Advocate, I will proactively work to make sure that the PBA gets its contract quickly with the retroactive pay raises they deserve. 2) Non-Public School Security. We need to ensure that children in non-public schools, some of which are targets, have the resources they need to ensure the safety of their students. Therefore, as Public Advocate, I will monitor DOE to ensure that the implementation 2015 school security bill continues and that non-public schools are protected. Moreover, I will fight for additional funding in the city budget to ensure that students in all non-public schools are safe and secure. All NYC school children deserve to be safe, regardless of where live or attend school.

Economic Development. I have devoted most of my tenure in the city council to advocating for the victims of superstorm sandy. Many of them residents of my district. My office has been devoted to delivering rapid relief and resources following the storm and worked tirelessly to cut through bureaucratic red tape to help constituents who were disproportionately affected by the storm. As public advocate, we will continue to help rebuild and ensure that everyone, from homeowners to business are getting the funding they need to restart their businesses that are still struggling. Secondly, we need to stop imposing burdens on start-ups and small businesses. We have to support sharing-economy companies not burden with regulations and caps on their expansion, and continue to create innovative transportation solutions. We can't have a modern economy if we can't get around the city, and if we are nickle and diming every small business with onerous and burdensome regulation. Lastly we need community based development. As public advocate, I will fight for more community inclusion in the development process not less.

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.

Education. I believe in educational choice and the rights of all parents to choose the education that their children receive. I have long supported supported the expansion of Charter Schools and the rights of non-public schools to operate freely and without bureaucratic entanglements. As Public Advocate I will take on DOE and the NYS Education department on the recently announced onerous regulations on school day and curriculum requirements that disproportionately impact Yeshivas and Catholic schools. The State education commissioner responded to select issues with a small number of schools by imposing draconian regulations that impact all non-public schools especially the ones that are providing great education and whose students are scoring well on all test scores. We must stress that the city can not absorb the hundreds of thousands of non-public school students currently enrolled in Yeshivas and Catholic schools and the regulations imposed by the state education department will not only cause these schools to close and force these children into public schools adding billions to the school budget but will eliminate the rights of every parent to educate their children as they see fit. As public advocate, I will represent the education rights of all parents and make sure that non-public schools stay open and have the resources they need to operate not extra burdens and regulations.

Health and Environment. Our office will leverage the Affordable Housing: NYCHA- Mayor de Blasio talks a big game on affordable housing, yet every day we learn more about his offices incompetence in handling NYCHA and in the expansion of affordable apartment across the city. As a councilman, I broke with my party and supported expanding rent stabilization across the city, and support giving the city more control of its rent laws and will support continued efforts to strengthen rent stabilization to prevent tenant harassment in the name of vacancy decontrol. Additionally, as Public Advocate, I will fight to monetize NYCHA assets for private development, and ensure that contracts and work orders are filled on time and on budget. HPD- Additionally, as PA will audit HPD violations, like heat, hot water, broken elevators and rats and vermin. We need to put the 'housing' back in affordable housing. Senior Housing- I will use the office of the Public Advocate to expand support for naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), advocate for state legislation in Albany to give tax credits to caregivers of senior citizens and also promote greater affordable housing set asides for seniors. To further our services for seniors we will create a communication portal within the office specifically devoted to senior citizens.

Public Transportation: Please see answers to questions 6 & 9

Health and Environment: HHC: Its important to stay within the mandate of the office and serve as the catch-all ombudsman for the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation. There have been number of new innovations announced Mayor de Blasio that are designed to reduce costs, streamline paperwork, and reduce wait times. Our office will work to ensure that patient care isn't suffering. Additionally, we want to make sure that new parents receive all the necessary education regarding their newborn's healthcare. Education and service is crucial to stemming disease outbreaks, ensuring proper nutrition and curbing mortality. Income level must never be a factor in the healthcare of newborns, and our office will make sure that all city hospitals

Environment: We will use our charter mandate to make sure that NYC's parks and community gardens and safe clean open spaces for all to enjoy. We can not allow failed social experiments like the Mayor's syringe exchange program to leave our parks littered with syringes endangering our children. Nor can we allow bureaucratic incompetence to close our beaches as the Mayor did in June 2018. Using our oversight authority we will work to ensure clean, safe, open parks beaches and coastlines for all to enjoy and experience,

II. CAMPAIGN PROMISES MADE TO VOTERS

What are the top five promises or goals you are making to voters during this campaign?

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. Be a check on the Mayor. With the Mayor term-limited and his attention on national issues, we are already seeing that city services, operations and overall management are lacking. We promise that we will use the office to hold the mayor accountable and force him to do his job day in and day out. For each failure in city service, there is a member of the administration who most likely did not do his or her job, we promise New Yorkers that we will get to the bottom of the matter, and ensure that their government is working for them and not for someone's political ambitions.
2. Transparency and Openness. Not only will our office be transparent, but we will use this office to enforce transparency at all levels of government. From FOIL, to open-data, New Yorkers can expect that Public Advocate Ulrich will guarantee that their requests for transparency are answered in a timely fashion and are not subject to delays, litigation or legal maneuvers. We are a city of 8.5 million and over 300,000 employees and New Yorkers deserve to know what is happening, and why the system breaks down. Transparency prevents corruption and we are going to open the doors to secrets and insider access.
3. Support for All Education. Parents have a right to choose how to educate their children free from bureaucratic interference. As Public Advocate, I will stand up for the rights of all students, especially the students and parents who choose to send their children to non-public schools and who are currently fighting for their educational rights. The top down, one size fits all approach to education does not work for religious families who choose to send their children to Yeshivas and Catholic schools. We need need to eliminate bureaucratic rules that eviscerate the sound education these schools already provide their students.
4. Community Based Development. Development needs to include local communities not ignore them. As Public Advocate, I will use the office to stand up for local community boards and local input in all big development projects. Projects cannot first be announced as as "fait accompli" with the community as an afterthought. We will work with each and every community board to ensure that City Planning and EDC is taking all concerns into account as part of an original development plan not after.
5. Veterans Affairs. I plan to use the office of the Public Advocate to build on upon our successes in the developing the office of Veterans Affairs and expand veterans access to health services like mental health treatments, and prescription drug access. Additionally, we will work to secure funding for vets to access small business loans to start businesses, access job training, and professional education and expand our 2017 program that provides funding to access cultural institutions (like Broadway) for veterans and their families.

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 would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner.

Campaign Finance. Already, our campaign is adhering to the newer stricter campaign finance law with a maximum contribution of \$1,000 and we are doing so voluntarily. Moreover, we plan to fully comply with the city's strict campaign finance program and submit to any and all rules of the CFB during this campaign. Our campaign is leading by example in this regard, and New Yorkers deserve to know that the Public Advocate belongs to them and not donors.

Full Disclosure and Transparency. As Public Advocate we will disclose all donations to the Fund for Public Advocacy on our website, so that New Yorkers can be confident that our office is not skirting the rules of the CFB by creating a secondary system (ie slush fund) not subject to disclosure.

COIB: In our office all NYC Conflicts of interest board letter and guidance will be disclosed, with the letter and guidance posted on our website. New Yorkers, won't have to wait for a request to be made of COIB simply for disclosure. Our office staff will be transparent from the outset and ensure that our requests and guidance are known to all. This includes but is not limited to, requests for expenses and travel to conduct the office's business

Lobbyist Meetings: All meetings with lobbyists and the issues lobbied on our website in real time so that ever New Yorker can see how our office operates without any delay. We will also disclose meetings with the previous employers (both profit and not for profit) of current key staffers and policy makers.

Too often, connections and influence can lead to the appearance of impropriety. Sunlight is the antidote, and disclosure of these meetings will help ensure the office is serving all New Yorkers and not just a selected few. Our goal as an office will be to ensure that there is complete transparency in all of our operations.

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.