

## INTRODUCTION

1. What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected?

### Delivering Strong Returns for Retirees and Investing in Our Future

Our public workers busted their tails for this city, and they deserve every penny of the retirement they were promised. As Comptroller, I'll protect our pensions with smart, strategic investments while putting our money to work for the greater good—fighting climate change, expanding affordable housing, and supporting MWBEs.

### Auditing Agencies and Holding Every Dollar Accountable

New Yorkers are fed up with waste, corruption, and government inefficiency. I'll conduct tough, no-nonsense audits—not just to expose where the money is going, but to create a real plan to reform agencies stuck in the past. Every dollar in the budget should go toward delivering results for working families—not political favors or backroom deals.

### Building a Fiscal Firewall to Protect New York's Future

We need to fight like hell to protect New York from economic instability and Republican attacks. That means fully funding universal childcare, expanding affordable housing, investing in CUNY to create real opportunity, and giving every kid a shot at a better future. Our budget should reflect the priorities of working people.

2. What experience have you had with good government and reform issues? (e.g., voting and election-reform, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I have zero tolerance for politicians who abuse their power. That's why I wrote the law that bars anyone convicted of public corruption from ever running for office again – because if you betray the public's trust, you don't get a second chance at being an elected official. I believe public service is a public trust and that our government should work for the people, not the well-connected. I will keep fighting for tougher ethics laws, real accountability, and transparency at every level – especially when it comes to New Yorkers hard-earned tax dollars.

## ELECTIONS AND VOTING

3. Voter turnout in New York City elections is exceptionally low, as they are held “off-cycle” in odd-numbered years. To boost local voter turnout and reduce participation gaps, the Legislature passed, and Governor Hochul signed, a law that moves county and town elections to even-numbered years, and lawmakers are supporting a constitutional amendment that would do the same for city elections, including New York City’s. Citizens Union is [leading a coalition of groups advocating](#) to move New York City’s elections to even-numbered years, and the City Council is considering a [Resolution in support](#) of that shift.

**Do you support moving New York City's elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you publicly support efforts in Albany to implement this reform?**

☐ YES/NO:

Comment (optional):

4. New York City is one of the few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the primary election. **Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of completely open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in one primary where the top two candidates, regardless of party affiliation, move on to the general election?**

☐ YES/NO:

Comment (optional):

\* In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve elections and voting in New York City.

## ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

5. The recent indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall have exposed serious ethical problems in City Government. **As the City's budget watchdog, what would you do to fight corruption and misuse of City funds?**

New Yorkers deserve a government that works for them — not for corrupt insiders and politically connected contractors. I will use the full power of the Comptroller's office to protect taxpayer dollars, expose corruption, and make sure city contracts go to businesses that play by the rules. Some proposals below:

### **Rolling Out the First-Ever NYC Comptroller Top 25 Bad Actors List**

I would create a public list of the worst-performing contractors and vendors — companies so bad that the city should stop doing business with them altogether.

Criteria for the list would include:

- Outstanding fines owed to city or state agencies
- Labor law violations (e.g., wage theft, unsafe working conditions)
- Open corruption or fraud investigations
- Repeated failure to deliver on city contracts
- Conflicts of interest or unethical business practices
- Companies on the list would be barred from receiving future city contracts — ensuring taxpayer money is not wasted on corrupt or incompetent vendors.

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### **Reforming the City's Contracting Process to Eliminate Pay-to-Play**

I would increase oversight and transparency over the city's contracting process to prevent politically connected firms from gaming the system.

- Require full disclosure of campaign contributions from contractors and vendors seeking city contracts.
- Establish an independent contract review board to prevent political influence in the awarding of city contracts.
- Require vendors to publicly disclose any subcontractors and their payment terms to ensure fair labor practices and prevent shell companies from hiding behind contracts.

### **Expanding the Comptroller's Investigative Authority Over City Agencies**

I will push for new legal authority for the Comptroller's office to directly investigate city agencies for corruption, mismanagement, and waste.

- Establish a Public Integrity Unit within the Comptroller's office to conduct independent investigations into waste and abuse.
- Provide whistleblower protections and a confidential reporting system for city workers and vendors to report corruption.
- Require annual anti-corruption audits of city agencies with the highest budgets and contract volumes.

### Ending the "Revolving Door" Between Government and Lobbying

I will push for new ethics laws to stop former city officials from cashing in on their government connections.

- Impose a 3-year ban on lobbying by former city officials and employees after leaving government service.
- Require full disclosure of any communications between city officials and registered lobbyists.
- Ban former city officials from working for companies they awarded city contracts to for at least five years after leaving office.

### Holding City Contractors Accountable for Labor Violations

I will push to make it easier for the city to terminate contracts with companies that violate labor laws.

- Require automatic contract termination for repeat offenders of labor law violations.
- Ensure city contracts include strong worker protection clauses and penalty structures for violations.

### Strengthening Oversight of Economic Development Funds

I will increase transparency and accountability over city-backed economic development projects to prevent waste and corruption.

- Require that any company receiving city-backed financing or tax breaks disclose executive compensation and corporate structure.
- Establish clawback provisions to reclaim public funds if companies fail to deliver on job creation or community benefits.
- Ensure that city-backed projects meet local hiring and wage requirements.

6. The City Comptroller is tasked with reviewing and registering City contracts and may present objections if the review process yields sufficient concern for corruption. **Please describe your approach to reviewing contracts, and what areas in City Government procurement you believe most need attention to such issues?**

New York City spends billions of dollars annually on contracts to provide essential services, from maintaining infrastructure to supporting nonprofits. While the current Comptroller has taken important steps to identify gaps and propose reforms, there is more work to do to safeguard public dollars and ensure transparency. I am committed to building on these efforts by improving oversight of subcontractors, ensuring they are properly reviewed and disclosed to eliminate risks of corruption and nepotism. I will push for stronger safeguards in emergency and non-competitive procurement processes to prevent fraud and abuse, even in urgent situations.

**7. What would be your auditing priorities? What agencies and departments would you audit first?**

I would start with auditing DOE, HPD, and NYCHA to start. I believe public education is the great equalizer and the key to New York City's future. I would conduct an audit of the NYC Department of Education to ensure every dollar of that colossal near \$40 billion DOE budget is actually going towards tangibly improving outcomes for NYC students, enhancing our classrooms, and supporting our hardworking teachers & staff; all while working to expand school-based supports like mental health services and after-school programs to better serve families.

I would also immediately audit the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) as I believe the city is undermining its own laudable affordable housing goals by making it much more lucrative for developers to build homeless shelters rather than housing. We are in the throes of a housing crisis and I'm not sure City Hall received their own memo. HPD is working with a skeleton crew and an insufficient capital budget at the worst possible time. I currently proudly represent thousands of NYCHA residents in Coney Island and I believe NYCHA must be audited in my administration. We can't surrender and wave the white flag and make people believe our only choice to fix NYCHA is privatization. Public housing needs to stay public.

As Comptroller, I'm going to use every tool in the toolbox to make sure city agencies aren't just spending money but actually delivering for New Yorkers. Performance audits let us look under the hood to see if agencies are getting the job done—whether it's building affordable housing, keeping our streets clean, or preparing for the next big storm. If agencies are falling short of these goals, I won't be afraid to call it out and strategize with city partners on solutions to better deliver. This job isn't about being a rubber stamp. It's about being a watchdog, a bulldog, and making sure every dollar works for the people of this city.

\* In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve ethics and accountability in New York City government.

## PUBLIC PENSION FUNDS

8. **Comptrollers Stringer and Lander implemented various strategies for responsible investing, like fossil fuel divestment and shareholder advocacy. Do you agree with that approach, and if so, how do you propose to balance maximizing investment returns with broader social responsibility goals? If not, what are the top investment priorities that the public pensions funds should focus on?**

Yes, I agree with the approach of responsible investing, including fossil fuel divestment and shareholder advocacy. As Comptroller, I'd strike the right balance between maximizing returns and doing what's right for New Yorkers. Sustainable investing isn't just the morally correct thing to do — it's smart financial strategy. Divesting from fossil fuels, for example, has already protected the pension funds from the ups and downs of that industry, and it's time to take the next step.

We need to be crystal clear: if you're managing our money, you better be taking climate risk seriously and cutting off financing for new fossil fuel projects. If not, we're taking our business elsewhere. It's time to shift those investments into renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure — things that will create good jobs, fight climate change, and deliver strong, stable returns for the pension funds.

That also means reassessing our investments in companies whose leadership and actions conflict with our city's values. Elon Musk's recent actions, including influencing federal decisions that have negatively impacted New York City such as the clawback of \$80 million in appropriated FEMA funding as well as significant cuts to the Social Security Administration and Veterans' benefits raise serious concerns. Given that our city's pension funds have approximately \$1.2 billion invested in Tesla, I support divesting from Tesla to ensure our investments align with the best interests of New Yorkers.

We've also got a huge opportunity with the Economically Targeted Investment (ETI) basket. Now that the state has increased the basket to 35%, we can put more pension fund dollars to work right here in New York City. That means building more affordable housing — including my NYC Worker Plan, which would create affordable housing specifically for city workers like teachers, nurses, and first responders. If you work for this city, you should be able to afford to live here.

We also need to step up support for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs). The ETI basket gives us the flexibility to increase access to capital for MWBEs and expand their share of city contracts. That's how we build a stronger, fairer economy — by making sure historically underrepresented businesses have a real shot at success. And I'd keep using our power as a shareholder to hold big corporations accountable — on climate, on workers' rights, on diversity, and more. The goal is simple: grow the funds responsibly while making sure our investments reflect the values of New Yorkers.

**9. How will you select asset managers, and what would you do to reduce conflicts of interest that can arise from firms seeking pension business?**

As Comptroller, I'll make sure we're diversifying our pool of asset managers, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it's smart investing. That means giving more opportunities to minority- and women-owned firms and working with managers who reflect the diversity and values of New York City. But let's be clear: our number one job is to protect the pensions of city workers, so every decision will be grounded in our fiduciary duty. I'll work closely with the fund trustees to make sure we're hitting our financial targets while investing in a way that makes sense for the long-term health of the funds.

To avoid conflicts of interest, I'll push for total transparency, publicly disclosing any political contributions or lobbying by firms looking to manage pension funds, and setting up independent review panels to make sure decisions are based on performance, not politics. At the end of the day, it's about delivering strong returns for city workers while making sure our investments reflect the values of the people who make this city run.

## BUDGET AND FISCAL HEALTH

- 10. Threats from the federal government to reduce funding to states and local governments could have a dramatic effect on New York City. How would you utilize the authority of the Comptroller's Office to ensure the fiscal health of our City, given these threats?**

If the federal government threatens to cut funding to New York City, the Comptroller's Office needs to be prepared to protect the city's fiscal health and make sure we can continue delivering essential services. First, I'd use the Comptroller's oversight authority to identify where the city is most vulnerable to federal cuts and develop a strategy to fill those gaps. That means working closely with city agencies to find efficiencies and reduce waste without cutting critical services.

Second, I'd use the Comptroller's power to invest city pension funds strategically. By diversifying our investments and maximizing returns, we can create more financial stability, which helps protect against budget shortfalls. And I'd make sure our investments align with the city's values while still meeting our fiduciary responsibility to deliver strong returns.

Finally, I'd push for more creative financing options like using the pension fund's expanded basket for targeted investments in affordable housing and infrastructure so we can grow the city's economy in a responsible way even when federal support is at risk.

- 11. The Trump administration has recently clawed back \$80 million in previously allocated funds by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), directly from City Government bank accounts. How would you protect the City's budget in the face of these efforts to reverse duly appropriated federal funds to the City?**

If the federal government is going to come after New York City's budget, we need a Comptroller who's willing to fight back and that's exactly what I'll do. When the Trump administration clawed back \$80 million in FEMA funds directly from the city's bank accounts, the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) response was completely lackluster. They should have immediately taken legal action to protect the city's money, but instead, they dragged their feet. That's unacceptable.

As Comptroller, I won't sit back and let Washington take what's ours. I've already called out OMB's weak response, and I'll continue to push for a more aggressive approach. That's why I support the Governor's proposal to give the Comptroller, City Council, and Public Advocate the explicit authority to sue the federal government using outside counsel if the City's Law Department fails to act promptly. This would give the Comptroller's Office the power to go to court directly, without waiting on City Hall, to protect city funds from unjust clawbacks and harmful federal overreach.

I'll use every tool available to safeguard city funds whether it's through strategic budgeting, building up our reserves, or holding the federal government accountable in court. The bottom line is that New York City needs a Comptroller who's ready to stand up and fight, not just sit back and hope things work out. That's the kind of leadership I'll bring to the job.



\* In the box below, you may provide any additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve the fiscal health and budget in New York City government.

## ADDITIONAL INFO

**12. Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.**

My path to public office was unconventional. Growing up, I wanted to be a member of The Ramones, not a member of the City Council. But my years touring the world in a punk rock band taught me about community, creativity, resilience, and the importance of fighting for the underdog. Those lessons guide me today as a public servant fighting to make sure our government does right by New Yorkers.

As a Council Member and Finance Chair, I've put those values into action by building new public schools, renovating my local parks, and delivering for working families. When the Mayor proposed cutting libraries, early childhood education, and after-school programs, I said hell no! When he said the city was broke, I proved him wrong. We found where they were hiding the extra cash, restored funding to essential services, and we got homeowners their first property tax rebate in 15 years!

Time and time again, I've been proven right on the city's budget forecasts. But it's not because I'm some math wizard or fortune teller. It's because I refuse to accept the status quo – I challenge it. And now more than ever working people deserve politicians with the courage to question the answers and speak truth to power. Above all, these days, politicians need to listen.

Life in New York City is getting harder and harder for working families. It's too expensive and people feel like they're being pushed out and away. Rich people aren't leaving New York. Working families are. That's not the city I grew up in. And it sure as hell isn't the city I want to leave behind for the next generation. But we have the power to change that – together.

With Trump back in office again, local government is back on the frontlines and these times call for big, bold solutions. This is about more than policies – it's about making our city livable again. We need better housing, stronger schools, and the kind of childcare system that makes it possible for parents to stay in the workforce and still raise a family here.

As Comptroller, my goal is simple: to make life easier for New Yorkers. Together, we can build a city that's affordable, supportive, and full of opportunity for all, not just the privileged few.

**13. Please provide any other info you would like us to know about you and your candidacy.**

I've been endorsed by TWU, Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association, Uniformed Firefighters Association, Maritime Engineers Beneficial Association, Congressmember Nydia Velasquez, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (Bronx), Council Majority Leader Amanda Farias (Bronx), Senator Andrew Gounardes (Brooklyn), Senator Leroy Comrie (Queens), Senator James Sanders Jr. (Queens), AM Khaleel M. Anderson, AM Bobby Carroll (Brooklyn), AM Joanne Simon (Brooklyn), AM Emily Gallagher (Brooklyn) and council colleagues Kamillah Hanks (Staten Island), Jennifer Gutierrez (Brooklyn and Queens), Selvena Brooks-Powers (Queens) Sandy Nurse (Brooklyn), Althea Stevens (Bronx), Nantasha Williams (Queens), Lincoln Restler (Brooklyn), and Kevin Riley (Bronx).

Additionally, I have the backing of lower Manhattan's largest Democratic club, the Downtown Independent Democrats, as well as the Chelsea Reform Democratic club and Three Bridges Democrats (both in Manhattan), The Unity Democratic Club (Bronx), the Independent Neighborhood Democrats (the largest Democratic club in the vote-rich 52nd Assembly District), Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats, covering the 52nd and 44th Assembly Districts, New Kings Democrats, Lambda Independent Democrats, as well as the Bay Ridge Democrats.

Full listing at [JustinBrannan.com](http://JustinBrannan.com)