



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Dermot Smyth
City Council District #	30
In which primary	Democratic
Education	Queens College
Current job, position, or occupation	Union Representative, UFT
Other positions or offices	N/A
Previous jobs or positions	Teacher

Campaign contact information

Website	https://www.dermotsmythny.com/
X	@dpsmyth1
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/dermotforcitycouncil?paipv=0&eav=AfYgdRIpM_omD2wVswTgUaBzjd1IWl-BgINgtM0vJQ96mnrSMvVzrEiEKqoBYq71rkU

INTRODUCTION

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

Promise 1: Public Education

Promise 2: Public Safety

Promise 3: Improving Quality of Life

2. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce? Why is that your top priority? If you are an incumbent, please also state what legislation you have passed which you are most proud of.

One of my priorities in office would be advocating for environmentally friendly public buildings, such as our schools. Placing solar panels on these rooftops will be a huge step forward in modernizing how we address energy use.

3. In your view, what are the major needs of your district’s constituents?

The residents of this district are concerned with quality of life issues. These are things like keeping our streets and sidewalks safe, keeping our parks clean and well maintained, and ensuring we have a high standard of public education.

4. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running, and do you have any achievements or involvement in your neighborhood you are particularly proud of?

I have lived in this district for 30 years. My work with the UFT has allowed me to advocate for students and teachers alike and make our public schools some of the best in the country.

5. 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’ve always been pro-government reform and have worked with the UFT on advancing a good government agenda. I will make sure that the City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations is doing their job to the fullest extent.

6. What do you think the role of the City Council is in city government this upcoming term?

It is our job on the City Council to serve and advocate for the people of NYC, fully fund government programs, and be a check on the Mayor’s office.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

7. Do you support moving New York City’s elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you co-sponsor a Council Resolution supporting that measure?

Yes

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.

8. The New York City Board of Elections (NYC BOE) has been a source of frustration for voters and candidates for years. The City Council appoints NYC BOE members and has the power to appoint commissioners who are committed to reform, but the most recent commissioners have been appointed behind closed doors. Do you commit to request a public hearing for BOE nominees, and to only vote for individuals who are publicly committed to reducing party-based patronage and supporting open hiring practices?

Yes

9. Do you support maintaining the use of Ranked Choice Voting in New York City’s elections?

Yes

10. 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, move on to the general election?

Yes

*** 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.**

Turnout is low in this City - especially during these off year elections. One thing I would advocate for on the City Council is expanding vote by mail so more people are able to vote from home during an election period.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

11. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by “bundling” donations from other people. Do you support limiting bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?

Yes

12. Are you a supporter of the City’s public campaign matching funds program, and do you commit to protecting the independence of the program and ensuring that the Campaign Finance Board has sufficient resources to run the program?

Yes

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve New York City’s campaign finance system.**

I believe that the NYC Matching Funds program is a great way to level the playing field and keep big money out of politics. I will advocate for continuing this program.

ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

13. The recent pattern of indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall has exposed serious ethical problems in City Government. Please describe how you will maintain the highest ethical standards in office.

Council Members take an oath when they are sworn in, and that is a sacred allegiance to the people of this city. I will run my office transparently, and I would ensure that the Oversight and Investigations Committees are fully staffed and operational.

14. Incoming public servants must sever ties and divest from companies or other interests that have business dealings with the City, but they are not required to recuse themselves when working on matters involving their former business partners, clients, employer, etc. Do you support forbidding public servants to work on matters relating to their former business partners, clients, employers, and other interests for a set period of time?

Yes

15. Some campaign consultants also work as lobbyists. Do you support restricting campaign consultants from lobbying the candidates they served for two years after the candidate won elected office?

Yes

Comments (optional)

I believe a one year ban was sufficient.

16. Do you support moving lobbying oversight and enforcement from the City Clerk’s Office to another agency charged with ethics issues, like the Conflicts of Interest Board?

Yes

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

17. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? (i.e., Place the final decision with the Police Commissioner; the Civilian Complaint Review Board; the Mayor; the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety; or another individual or entity).

I believe that this final say should come from the Police Commissioner, who is appointed by our elected Mayor.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

18. The Mayor currently has the power to block charter revision ballot questions (proposed by the City Council, other charter commissions, and citizen petitions) by establishing their own Charter Revision Commission. Do you support removing this Mayoral power?

Yes

19. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and be put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?

Yes

20. Please provide your views about the New York City Council's "advice and consent" powers. In what cases, if any, should a mayor need the Council's approval for an appointment of a high ranking Mayoral official, such as an agency commissioner?

The Council should be unilateral to the Mayor's office. The mayor should have to have his commissioners go through an efficient advice and consent process to ensure we have the most competent commissioners in NYC.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve the system of checks and balances in New York.**

N/A

ADDITIONAL INFO