



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Julie Menin
City Council District #	5
In which primary	Democratic
Current job, position, or occupation	Council Member

Previous jobs or positions

Council Member Julie Menin represents New York City Council District 5, covering the East Side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island. An attorney, civic leader, three time City Commissioner, and former small business owner, Julie has over two decades of experience in the public and private sectors. She currently serves as the Chair of the City Council Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection. Julie previously served as Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs and Commissioner of Media and Entertainment. She also served as an adjunct professor at Columbia University. Julie most recently served as the City's Census Director, successfully advocating against the Trump Administration's efforts to add a citizenship question and achieving a historic result by finishing first among all major cities. Because of this effort, New York City will be receiving its fair share over the next decade of over \$1.5 trillion in federal funding for public schools, affordable housing, healthcare, infrastructure, and other vital programs.

As Council Member, Julie has passed over 17 bills of which she was the primary sponsor, including the groundbreaking Healthcare Accountability Act to lower and bring transparency to excessive hospital prices. Her tenure has included several critical policy wins such as advancing universal childcare in New York City, easing burdens on small businesses by establishing a one-shop-stop web portal for all city licenses, codifying the right to reproductive health services, and creating an Office of Healthcare Accountability to rein in skyrocketing healthcare prices. At the same time, Julie has effectively addressed a full range of constituent issues: sanitation and rat-mitigation concerns, street safety, unlicensed smoke shops, robust capital funding for district parks and schools, access to low-cost internet for NYCHA residents, and more. Julie also led a groundbreaking initiative in partnership with the Gray Foundation and the Museum of Jewish Heritage to address antisemitism across New York City. This initiative will bring 85,000 public and charter school students to the museum to engage in immersive exhibition tours and comprehensive Holocaust education programs.

As Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs ("DCA"), Julie reinvigorated the agency by increasing consumer restitution by 70 percent while instituting 25 reforms to lower onerous fines on small businesses where there was no consumer harm. Also under Julie's leadership the agency implemented the City's historic Paid Sick Leave Law, launched a new Earned Income Tax Credit initiative that resulted in over \$260 million being returned to low-income New Yorkers, and conducted trailblazing investigations into industries preying on New Yorkers such as for-profit colleges. She also launched an investigation into a major online firearms marketer to determine if NYC-based sellers were using this website to advertise and illegally sell second hand guns without DCA licenses – thereby skirting City, State and federal laws. In addition, as DCA Commissioner, Julie spearheaded a new initiative that has now seeded over 200,000 NYC

public school kindergarteners with a college savings account and chaired the board of New York City Kids Rise, the not-for-profit organization she helped create to implement the project.

Julie also previously served as Commissioner of Media and Entertainment where she brought TV and film production to an all-time record for the city creating thousands of jobs and significant revenue for New York. Julie launched new programs to increase women’s representation and opportunities in film, TV, theater and the music industry, such as the first-ever women’s film fund, job training programs to increase gender equity in the film, theater, TV and music industries, and a slate of new women’s programming on the city’s TV channels. Julie also negotiated the historic deal to bring the Grammy Awards back to New York in 2017, resulting in a \$200 million economic benefit for New York City.

Before becoming a Commissioner, Julie served as the seven-year Chair of Manhattan Community Board 1 where she helped lead Lower Manhattan’s resurgence after 9/11. Several weeks after her small business was badly damaged on 9/11, she founded the not-for-profit organization Wall Street Rising which focused on the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan for residents and small businesses, ultimately developing it into an organization with over 30,000 members. She served as a board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the 9/11 Memorial Jury, and the 9/11 Memorial Board and was one of the founding board members of the World Trade Center Performing Arts Center (The Perelman Center.) She was credited for her solution-based leadership after 9/11 including building three new schools downtown, advocating for the creation of the WTC Health Registry to provide for healthcare for first responders and residents, pushing for the successful creation of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center to centralize and manage 60 active construction projects on and near Ground Zero, and successfully leading the charge to move the trial of Khalid Sheik Mohammed from Lower Manhattan.

Prior to her career in public service, Julie practiced law as a regulatory attorney at Wiley, Rein & Fielding, a large law firm in Washington D.C., and as the Senior Regulatory Counsel at Colgate-Palmolive where she played a lead role in numerous agency cases involving the Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, and also litigated disputes in state and federal courts. She has served on the board of the Women’s Campaign Fund, where she helped launch She Should Run, a nationwide initiative that has encouraged thousands of women to run for elected office and served on the board of Eleanor’s Legacy, an organization in New York focused on electing more Democratic women statewide. In addition, she has served on the boards of the Downtown Hospital, Citizens Union, the Municipal Arts Society, the September 11th Memorial Foundation, the WTC Performing Arts Center, the National Advisory Board for Public Service at Harvard University and the board of trustees of Columbia University.

Julie has been recognized as a Women’s Campaign Fund Rising Star, Citizen Union’s Civic Leader, City and State’s “Power 100 Women” and “Top 25 Women in Public Service.” She has also been the recipient of numerous awards including Columbia University’s John Jay Award and the League of Conservation Voters Public Service Award. She has served as a national commentator on law and politics and has appeared on CNN, The Today Show, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, and other outlets and previously hosted and co-produced a local NBC cable news show focused on politics and law.

Julie also served as an adjunct professor at Columbia teaching on city and state government, focusing on how cities can take the lead in the face of deregulation. She graduated magna cum laude from Columbia University and received her law degree from Northwestern University School of Law.

Julie is a proud mom and honored to represent the district that her mother and grandmother settled in (known as Little Hungary) after surviving the Holocaust and escaping from Hungary. Julie resides in Yorkville with her husband and children.

Campaign contact information

Website	juliefornyc.com
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INTRODUCTION

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

Promise 1: Fighting for universal childcare and affordable communities for working families. The City council has passed my package of groundbreaking legislation that sets New York City on track to be the first city in America to implement universal childcare and I spearheaded the largest rezoning on the East Side of Manhattan that will bring more affordable housing to our Council District.

Promise 2: Lowering healthcare costs - see question 2

Promise 3: Make City government a more transparent, accountable institution. Please see below answers.

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.

I was the proud sponsor of both the Safe Hotels Act and the groundbreaking Healthcare Accountability Act. With hotel licensing, this landmark legislation requires hotels to obtain a license, implements crucial safety measures such as panic buttons for housekeepers, human trafficking recognition training, and subcontracting restrictions for critical, public-facing hotel staff.

In regard to the Office of Healthcare Accountability, there is simply no other area where as a consumer, you are procuring a service, and yet at your most vulnerable time when you are in the hospital, you have no idea what you will be charged for that service. By bringing transparency to this often opaque aspect of healthcare, we aim to better manage and reduce costs for both the City and its residents. Currently, healthcare costs in New York City are opaque, inconsistent and astronomical. In 2000, New York City spent over \$1.6 billion on health insurance for its employees. By 2017, this cost had risen to over \$6.3 billion and continued to skyrocket to \$9.5 billion in 2021. This is costing the City billions and that is why a coalition led by 32BJ and included DC37, New York Central Labor Council, Hotel Trades Council, UFCW Local 1500, UAW and the UFT all supported price transparency. Reducing healthcare costs would save our City billions of dollars each fiscal year, money that we could allocate to affordable housing, education, public housing and other vital critical needs.

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

It is imperative that constituents' needs are met and top priorities include building affordable housing to properly address the city's affordable housing crisis, enacting universal child care and fighting the draconian cuts by the federal government.

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 Council District 5 since 2014 and am raising my family here. I am third generation in this district as my mother was raised in the district and my grandmother lived here as well. During my tenure in the Council, I have delivered over \$55 million dollars in discretionary funding which will bring significant upgrades to our Parks, Schools and infrastructure. I have worked hard to increase public safety, bring litter basket pickups to record levels, and launch a novel rat mitigation program. I hope to build on all of these in a third term.

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 am proud to have served as a Board member of Citizens Union and to receive Citizen Union's Civic Leadership Award in 2011. I have worked on good government issues for two decades-fighting for increased transparency and accountability, campaign finance reform, redistricting reforms and countless other issues.

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

The City Council is a separate but equal partner from the Mayor's administration in how our City is run. Besides passing laws that benefit New Yorkers, we must have a strong City Council that can negotiate the City's budget with the Mayor, monitor City agencies such as the Department of Education to make sure they're serving New Yorkers effectively and utilize the Council's land use powers to advance New York City's growth and affordability.

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

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

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.

As stated before, I am proud to have served as a Board member of Citizens Union and to receive Citizen Union's Civic Leadership Award in 2011. I have worked on good government issues for two decades- fighting for increased transparency and accountability, campaign finance reform, redistricting reforms and countless other issues. I have a two decade history on good government issues and reforms and am the only candidate in the race with a proven track record and history on these issues.

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

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 served on the Reform Council of the Vera Institute and have been involved in their work to institute reforms to our criminal justice system. I support efforts to have state legislation that creates a real accountability structure where final disciplinary authority is transparent and not swept under the rug. The CCRB should have final say on police disciplinary matters. To enable the CCRB to take on this new responsibility, we must expand its funding and resources and make serving on the board a full time job. Moreover, we need to ensure the CCRB’s public database of police disciplinary records are updated daily and provides a thorough description of the incident.

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?

Advice and consent is a safeguard of democratic government established by the founders of this country's democracy to protect the public interest from those of individuals. It is a well-established democratic process that is used in the nation's largest municipalities, as well as the state and federal governments. The legislation which passed the Council modestly expands a process that ensures the City has qualified commissioners committed to the public interest, an authority the Council has a proven track record of employing responsibly.

ADDITIONAL INFO