



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Justin Edward Sanchez
City Council District #	17
In which primary	Democratic
Age	33
Education	Bronx High School of Science, Undergrad: Valedictorian, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, Masters: MPA, New York University
Current job, position, or occupation	Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Nathalia Fernandez

Other positions or offices

Currently: Chair - LGBTQ+ Caucus for the New York State Young Democrats, Former: President - Stonewall Democrats of NYC; Chair - Hispanic & Latinx Caucus for the Young Democrats of America; Chair - LGBTQ+ Caucus for the Young Democrats of America; Vice President of Bronx Young Democrats

Previous jobs or positions

Director of Latino Outreach - New York State Democratic Party; Chief of Staff to Assembly Member Nathalia Fernandez; Director of External Affairs for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; Deputy Director of External Affairs for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; Community Board Liaison for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; Constituent & LGBTQ+ Liaison for Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.; East Bronx Regional Director for Bill de Blasio 2017; Recruitment Director for the Working Families Party

Campaign contact information

Website	www.sanchez2025.nyc
Instagram	thebronxsanchez
Facebook	thebronxsanchez
Bluesky	thebronxsanchez
Other social media platforms	thebronxsanchez

INTRODUCTION

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

Promise 1: Making City Services Work For Us

Promise 2: Tackling the Opioid Crisis

Promise 3: Improving Our Education System/Youth Services

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.

There are many areas of legislation which I'm looking to explore. Depending on how quickly we can work with all of our partners, I hope to quickly find a way to get housing built on a "Community Median Income" model which would build affordable housing that's truly responsive to neighborhood median income as its based on either Community Board or Council District income ranges.

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

First, I will want to make city services work for my community. We will build the largest and most experienced constituent services team in the city ensuring that city agencies meet our needs. I will tackle our community's litter problem by installing more public trash cans and revising the city's policies on their placement. Furthermore, I will streamline access to city services, so our residents can get the help that they need without convoluted hurdles. Civic engagement is at the heart of this initiative, and this starts with returning the District 17 community to the Participatory Budgeting program. Second, we need to be firm and serious in tackling the opioid crisis and substance use disorder. I will make it my mission to invest further in community non-profits that are already on the frontlines of this crisis, making sure that they are equipped with the resources they need to succeed. Third, we need to revamp our education system. I will fight to expand access to free GED and vocational training programs, so that everyone in our community has a clear path to success. In that same way, it is vital that we develop more pathways from public education to unionized city jobs; I will make it a point to prioritize the creation of these pathways, ensuring more opportunities for success with or without a college degree. Moreover, I will advocate for universal afterschool and weekend programs that give all kids a safe, enriching place to grow academically and socially.

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'm born and raised in the Bronx and depending on the redistricting year, mostly in my district. I, like many of our Bronx families, moved quite often but the memories I mostly associate with my childhood are those overlooking the Bruckner Expressway. In my district in particular, as a first year Constituent Liaison, I was able to increase voter participation in Participatory Budgeting by 100% YoY. I am particularly proud of this achievement because I truly believe we need to constantly show our community that we have power in our vote and the power to make substantive change for the betterment of all.

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.

Good government and reform is extremely important to me. For my MPA, I did an independent study on the New York State budgeting process. As Chief of Staff, I worked with my State Senator to (re)introduce what we called "Protecting the People's Budget" or PPB. This bill would curtail the Governor's ability to legislate in the budget. Through this effort, we were able to not only get the entire Republican caucus, but had Senators from all over the ideological spectrum in support with over 40% of the Senate as co-sponsors. It is a bill that is deeply personal to me, and I hope that one day we will be able to push it over the finish line.

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

I strongly believe this City Council will have a unique challenge of addressing the city issues we have and making people believe in local government while also being on the frontlines of protecting our city against a repressive federal government intent on destroying good government.

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.**

First and foremost, I will be returning our district to the Participatory Budgeting program. I am an organizer

at heart and as the next Council Member, I look forward to delivering door-to-door constituent outreach to engage all voters and increasing participation in local government and hopefully future elections.

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 plan to work with my colleagues and my community partners such as Citizen Union to continue making our New York City campaign finance system better. I am extremely grateful for our campaign finance system and hope that this race helps to inspire more of our community members to dream big, fight hard, and win their own future political races.

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.

From a Constituent Liaison, to Director of External Affairs, to a Chief of Staff, I have always made sure that as a government employee I maintained the highest ethical standards possible. While also serving as the President of the Stonewall Democratic Club, for two years, I showed how to keep political and governance separated. I always had our government ethics attorney a phone call away to ensure that we were always checking and double checking anything and everything to ensure the highest level of ethical integrity in our work. As Council Member, I will continue to operate that way.

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

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

I look forward to working with my colleagues and community partners to continue improving our ethical standards in NYC government.

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 the final decision should lie with the CCRB.

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

I have been and will always in support of improving police accountability. I was in complete support of the "How Many Stops Act" and will always fight for equity and justice for my community.

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?

I believe that the Council's "advice and consent" powers are an integral part of good government. I agree with Citizens Union assessment of Intro 908A that we should take more time to truly deliberate an assess which of the Mayor's appointments should need Council approval as well as the proper timeline to get that done both at the start of a mayoral term and in the event of the need for new appointments throughout the

mayoral term.

*** 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.**

I believe that my work on trying to curtail the ability of the Governor to legislate during the budgeting process is a part of simply wanting to improve the system of checks and balances in New York. I am excited to continuing finding more ways to improve the system of checks and balances and be a part of the transformative change that shows New Yorkers that government can truly work for us.

ADDITIONAL INFO