



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Rachel Storch
City Council District #	4
In which primary	Democratic
Age	52
Education	Washington University School of Law, J.D. (1997); Harvard College, A.B., History and Literature, cum laude (1994).
Current job, position, or occupation	COO at Fifth Avenue Synagogue
Previous jobs or positions	Development Staff at the 92nd St. Y, Missouri State Representative (2004-2010), Missouri State Director at Hillary Clinton for President, Legal Counsel and Policy Director for the Democratic Leader of the Missouri State Senate, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Senator Jean Carnahan.

Campaign contact information

Website	rachelstorch.nyc
X	https://x.com/rachelstorchnyc
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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: New Yorkers do not feel as safe as they should. I will stand against any efforts to defund law enforcement and tackle our critically understaffed police department by advocating for improved recruitment, competitive compensation, and retention initiatives. I will also work to increase investment in mental health services both as a moral obligation and a public safety matter. I'll champion the implementation of advanced crime mapping technology to enable data-driven, targeted policing strategies that maximize our limited resources. I'll ensure our officers have the training and tools they need to effectively serve our communities while building stronger police-community relationships.

Promise 2: I will work to expand affordable housing supply to combat Manhattan's soaring rents (currently averaging over \$4,000/month). I'll protect existing rent-stabilized and Mitchell-Lama housing while creating new pathways to homeownership for working families. I will spearhead efforts to transform underutilized midtown office buildings into affordable housing units. With office vacancy rates at historic highs, we have a unique opportunity to address our housing crisis while revitalizing our central business district. Most importantly, I'll ensure this work creates good-paying jobs by requiring all conversion projects to use union labor, supporting our working families while building much-needed affordable housing for New Yorkers.

Promise 3: I will work tirelessly to address the daily quality of life concerns that affect East Side residents. This includes cracking down on the scaffolding blight by implementing stricter timelines and increased penalties for property owners who leave sidewalk sheds up indefinitely. I'll push for stronger enforcement against illegal cannabis shops that have proliferated in our neighborhoods. I'll also prioritize pedestrian safety by demanding accountability from delivery app companies and implementing stricter enforcement against reckless e-bike riders. Additionally, I'll ensure adequate funding for our cultural institutions, libraries, and public spaces that make our district special.

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.

The first piece of legislation I would introduce would regulate e-bikes. Across the districts, residents have communicated their deep concerns with the bikes flying down the streets and sidewalks, and the extent to which this has impacted public safety and quality of life in NYC, particularly for seniors. I would like to see legislation that would do the following:

- License e-bikes, mopeds, and scooters above a certain weight
- Require lights on the front and back of e-vehicles
- Increase fines
- Prohibit e-vehicles from parks and greenways
- Increase accountability from delivery app companies

As a former legislator, I passed a critical amendment during the budget process to restore funding to the local mass transit system. I also succeeded in passing legislation that funded Missouri's Safecare network, a program to train doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers to recognize and treat child sex abuse, physical abuse, and neglect.

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

When I am talking to voters, public safety and quality of life are the issues I keep hearing again and again. Constituents living in the 4th City Council District need to feel safe when riding the subway, crossing the street, and getting their groceries. Safety would be my number one priority if elected to office and I will work tirelessly to ensure that my neighbors here can not only live but thrive in NYC.

In addition, voters in District 4 have profound concerns related to the actions of the current administration in Washington, DC, and are looking for a strong voice to stand firm against any actions with negative implications for NYC, including cuts to education and Medicaid; attacks on organized labor; attacks on immigrants; and erosions of constitutional rights.

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 was born in this district and returned 15 years ago, putting down permanent roots by choosing to raise my family here. As a mother of four, I'm deeply invested in our community's future and plan to remain here for the long term. My involvement in the district includes meaningful work with two important local institutions. I worked at the 92nd Street Y, a cornerstone cultural and community center that has served our neighborhood for generations with educational programming, cultural events, and community services. Additionally, I've served as the Chief Operating Officer of the Fifth Avenue Synagogue for the last 5.5 years, where I've worked tirelessly to strengthen our religious community and extend our outreach and support services. This position has given me firsthand experience managing complex operations and budgets while being responsive to community needs. Over the past year and a half, I have worked closely with leadership at the synagogue and NYPD to ensure that congregants are able to worship and attend community events safely in the midst of rising anti-semitism in our city. I am incredibly proud of this work and intend to continue to be a voice against hate—in all its forms—once elected to office. These roles have allowed me to develop deep connections throughout our district and gain valuable insight into the diverse concerns of East Side residents. They've also provided me with the operational and leadership experience necessary to effectively represent our community on the City Council.

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.

Throughout my career, I've been deeply committed to good government and reform initiatives, with a particular focus on increasing representation and diversity in our political system. One of my proudest achievements has been my work recruiting candidates for public office, with special emphasis on supporting female candidates and women of color. I've actively worked to identify, mentor, and support these candidates through the complex process of running for office. This has included helping them navigate campaign finance requirements, build effective campaign teams, and connect with community leaders and organizations. I understand that true governmental reform requires both expanding who sits at the decision-making table and ensuring those individuals are committed to transparency, ethics, and accountability. My recruitment efforts prioritized candidates who share these values and worked to advance reforms in campaign finance, voting access, ethics standards, and police accountability. As a legislator, I led the Democratic party in an effort to establish non-partisan redistricting in Missouri. My bill would have required district lines to be drawn with detailed geographic information, and would have removed political affiliation as a concern while protecting racial minority districts so as not to dilute voting strength. I filed additional "good government" legislation, including: preventing legislators from taking

advantage of a “golden parachute” pension provision; prohibiting legislators from accepting gifts over \$50; expanding the crime of Bribery of a Public Servant. I helped to oversee Missouri’s Voter Protection program, working to train attorneys and volunteers, and working through Election Day to ensure that elections ran smoothly.

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

It will be vital for the City Council to take an active role in fighting back against the actions of President Trump and his administration, many of which could have potentially devastating effects in New York City. This includes potential cuts to Medicaid, affecting NYC’s Health and Hospitals system, the largest municipal healthcare system in country; the dismantling of the Department of Education, and ramifications for Title I and programs affecting special education and low-income students, as well as Pell grants; cuts to veterans services; attacks on immigrants; and attacks on constitutional rights. In addition, the city must work to address the epidemics of mental health and homelessness that have not been adequately addressed, and work to restore public safety.

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.

Comments (optional)

Voter turnout in NYC is devastatingly low, and I would do everything in my power to increase turnout and participation.

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

*** 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.**

I have volunteered prior to and on election day to educate voters on local issues, such as Proposition 1,

and participated in Get Out The Vote efforts through phone banking and voter contact. As a candidate, I have worked intensely to meet voters and ensure that they understand how to participate in our system, both regarding registration and navigating ranked choice.

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.**

On the Council, I would work to see that the Campaign Finance Board speed up its campaign audit process so that violations and campaign wrongdoings are exposed more speedily. At this time, these audits sometimes extend far beyond a legislator’s elected term. This needs to change.

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 a City Council member, maintaining the highest ethical standards would be fundamental to my service. I recognize that recent events have eroded public trust in our city government, which makes ethical leadership even more critical. I believe council members must lead by example in promoting an ethical culture throughout city government. I would advocate for strengthening the city’s existing ethics bodies, supporting whistleblower protections, and increasing transparency in government operations. I bring a proven track record as an ethical legislator that demonstrates my dedication to these principles. During my previous legislative service, I established a reputation for transparency and ethical governance that I’m proud to stand on.

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.**

Advancing stronger legislation on ethics is an area I have a record on and pushed for as an elected leader (see list above in Question 5 of my filed ethics bills, including expanding the crime of bribery of a public servant; reforms to pension legislation; and restrictions on gifts to elected officials). I was also the Ethics Compliance Officer in the United States Senate office of US Senator Jean Carnahan when I served as her Deputy Chief of Staff. I believe that a transparent, accountable, and ethical government is something citizens deserve and I would work towards this goal as a Council member, as I always have.

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 say on police discipline should rest with the Police Commissioner, but with important checks and balances built into the process. The Police Commissioner, as the head of the department, should ultimately be responsible for maintaining discipline and standards within the NYPD. This preserves the chain of command and accountability structure within the department. The Commissioner has the operational expertise and departmental knowledge to understand the full context of disciplinary cases. However, this authority should come with meaningful oversight. The Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) must play a substantial role in investigating complaints and recommending disciplinary actions. In cases where the Commissioner chooses to deviate from CCRB recommendations, there should be a requirement for transparent public explanation. I would also support a system where certain serious cases - particularly those involving excessive force or pattern of misconduct - could be subject to additional review by an independent entity. This could take the form of a panel that includes representatives from the CCRB, legal experts, and community members.

*** 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.

On the City Council, I'll work to increase funding for the Civilian Complaint Review Board so that it can fulfill its mandate. In recent years, the City Council has expanded the CCRB's jurisdictional scope and caseload without concurrently increasing its budget to do the mandated work. That must change and, if elected, I will advocate strongly to increase the budget for the CCRB.

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

Comments (optional)

I am open to further discussion/study of this topic. My initial feelings are that 1) the Speaker is elected by a majority of the Council and represents the will of the majority; and 2) this is something of a slippery slope and it might be difficult to determine the bar for "strong support."

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 the City Council's "advice and consent" powers serve as a crucial check and balance in our municipal government. While the mayor should have significant latitude to build their administration, certain high-ranking appointments warrant Council approval to ensure proper oversight and accountability. In my view, the Council should have approval authority for commissioners who head major agencies that directly impact public safety, health, and essential city services. These agencies have enormous budgets, employ thousands of city workers, and make decisions that affect millions of New Yorkers daily. The Council's review process brings transparency to these appointments, allows for public input, and ensures nominees have the qualifications and vision needed to effectively serve our city. It also creates a foundation for productive working relationships between the Council and these commissioners once they assume office. However, I don't believe the Council needs approval power for every mayoral appointment. The mayor was elected to lead the city and should maintain the ability to assemble much of their team without legislative interference.

ADDITIONAL INFO

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

The government should work proactively to create opportunity, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure that economic growth benefits everyone. I believe in common sense policies, fighting for core Democratic values while finding practical solutions to improve people's daily lives. I'm running because I love New York City and want to ensure it remains a place of opportunity for all. As a mother of four raising my family on the Upper East Side, I'm deeply invested in our community's future. Drawing on my experience as a three-term state legislator, I know how to deliver results by building coalitions and standing firm with working

families. The challenges facing our city – from public safety and housing affordability to education and rising antisemitism – require experienced leadership. I'm running to bring my proven effectiveness to the City Council to strengthen our neighborhoods and preserve what makes the East Side special.

My children are fifth-generation New Yorkers. My great-grandparents came to NYC many years ago, escaping persecution and poverty in Europe. For them, America and New York City represented the opportunity to have a better life: a place where one could attain an education; have social mobility; practice a religion freely. My grandparents attended Hunter College and CCNY tuition-free, which paved the way to a better life. I am determined that this vision and version of New York City remain in place and that future generations will have access to opportunity and the American dream.