



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name Wilfredo Lopez

City Council District # 8

In which primary Democratic

Age 44

Education JD

Current job, position, or occupation Attorney

Other positions or offices
NA

Previous jobs or positions

1. Senior Director of Government Affairs for The Urban Resource Institute Sept. 2022- Feb. 2025
2. Executive Director of Intergov and Policy for NYC Department of Correction Dec. 2021-Jan. 2022
3. Legislative Director for Former Council Member Kallos-Dec. 2018-Dec. 2021
4. Prosecutor at Kings County DA's Office Jul 2017-Dec. 2018

Campaign contact information

Website www.Lopezfornyc.com

X <https://x.com/LopezforNY>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/lopezfornyc/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LopezforNY/>

Bluesky NA

Other social media platforms NA

INTRODUCTION

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

Promise 1: Make Our Community Affordable Again I'll fight to preserve and build deeply affordable housing tied to real neighborhood incomes—not inflated AMIs. That means expanding social housing models like community land trusts and HDFCs, fully funding NYCHA without privatization, and enacting strong tenant protections like Right to Counsel and Good Cause Eviction.

Promise 2: Invest in Our Youth and Public Safety We need to fund what keeps our communities truly safe: schools, jobs, housing, and youth programs. I'll push for expanded after-school and summer youth employment programs, mental health services, and violence interruption efforts to address the root causes of crime—not just its symptoms.

Promise 3: Expand Access to Childcare and City Services As a new dad, I know childcare is unaffordable for too many working families. I'll fight for universal, free childcare and better pay for childcare workers. I'll also make City services more accessible by expanding language access, offering evening and weekend constituent services, and meeting people where they are.

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.

If elected, the first piece of legislation I would introduce would reestablish the Department of Personnel to directly address the staffing crisis in our city agencies. Right now, essential services—from housing assistance to sanitation and public health—are suffering because of persistent vacancies and a hiring process that's too slow and inefficient under DCAS.

Bringing back a dedicated Department of Personnel would streamline recruitment, strengthen workforce planning, and ensure that hiring is strategic and equitable—especially for frontline agencies that serve working-class communities. This is a top priority because without a fully staffed city workforce, New Yorkers—especially in places like District 8—are left without the services they rely on. We can't fix housing, public safety, or affordability without rebuilding the capacity of our government to serve.

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

District 8 spans East Harlem and the South Bronx—two communities rich in culture, resilience, and history, but also deeply impacted by decades of disinvestment. The major needs of our constituents reflect systemic challenges that require bold, equity-driven solutions.

Affordable housing is the most urgent issue. The vast majority of residents are renters, and more than half are rent-burdened. NYCHA developments across the district face chronic disrepair, while private market rents continue to rise beyond reach. People need stable, deeply affordable housing and protections against displacement.

Public safety is another pressing concern—but residents are also clear: safety comes from investment, not just enforcement. Our communities need funding for youth programs, mental health services, violence interruption efforts, and community-centered infrastructure.

Access to city services remains a daily struggle. Whether it's navigating public benefits, securing school placements, or accessing legal help, our constituents often face long wait times, bureaucratic roadblocks, or a lack of culturally and linguistically competent support.

Additionally, childcare is unaffordable, particularly for working families, and too many parents are forced to choose between going to work and caring for their children. Our district also needs stronger healthcare access, particularly for undocumented and low-income residents, and investments in education, especially early literacy and support for multilingual learners.

Ultimately, the people of District 8 need a government that meets them where they are and delivers on its promises—because they've waited too long for justice, investment, and respect.

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've lived in District 8 since 2019, and in that time, I've been deeply involved in efforts to strengthen and uplift our community. One of the accomplishments I'm most proud of is organizing a rent strike during the pandemic when our building lost gas service due to landlord negligence. I helped form a tenant association, and together, we fought back—and won. That experience showed me the power of collective action and deepened my commitment to housing justice.

I also serve as a public member of Community Board 11's Housing Committee, where I've worked to spotlight the housing and affordability challenges facing East Harlem residents. In addition, I'm a proud member of the Community Advisory Board at Metropolitan Hospital, where I advocate for access to quality, culturally competent healthcare—especially for the uninsured and undocumented.

As a board member at Union Settlement, one of East Harlem's most historic and impactful nonprofits, I support programs that provide everything from early childhood education to mental health services and economic empowerment initiatives.

These roles aren't just titles—they reflect my values and my daily work to make sure District 8 is a place where everyone, regardless of income or background, has a real shot at stability, opportunity, and dignity.

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 worked directly on key good government and reform issues during my time as Legislative Director for former Council Member Ben Kallos—one of the Council's most active champions of transparency, campaign finance reform, and ethical governance.

One of the most impactful pieces of legislation I helped pass was Local Law 1 of 2019, which made the current 8-to-1 campaign finance matching system retroactive to the beginning of the 2021 election cycle. This forced candidates, including mayoral contenders, to return large over-the-limit donations and helped shift power away from big money and back toward everyday New Yorkers.

I also helped pass Local Law 128 of 2019, which made it possible for candidates to access a full public match—eliminating the so-called “big dollar gap” that still pushed candidates toward high-dollar donors. That reform ensured that grassroots, community-driven campaigns had a real shot at competing.

Additionally, I worked on legislation to shut down “zombie committees”—campaign accounts held by former elected officials long after leaving office. These committees were often used to influence elections without real accountability. We pushed for transparency and integrity, helping close a loophole that had undermined the public's trust.

These reforms weren't just about fixing technical issues—they were about making our democracy more accessible, transparent, and fair. I'm proud of that work and remain committed to building a government that earns and keeps the public's trust.

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

In the upcoming term, the City Council must serve as a critical check on executive overreach—both at the state and federal levels. With the real possibility of a Cuomo administration in the city and a second Trump administration in Washington, the Council’s role in protecting New Yorkers becomes even more urgent.

We must act as a bulwark against policies that harm working families, immigrants, and vulnerable communities, and continue advancing bold, progressive legislation even in the face of external resistance. That means defending New York’s status as a sanctuary city, protecting tenant rights, preserving public housing, fighting climate change, and ensuring our city budget reflects our values—not austerity.

The Council must also ensure transparency, accountability, and community voice in every part of city governance. From oversight hearings to budget negotiations, we are the body closest to the people—and we must show up with clarity, courage, and purpose.

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)

Yes, I support moving New York City’s elections to even-numbered years, and I would proudly co-sponsor a Council Resolution to make that happen. Voter turnout in odd-numbered years is consistently low—especially in communities like District 8—and that low engagement benefits entrenched power and allows harmful, status quo policies to persist for decades. Aligning municipal elections with higher-turnout federal and state cycles would help ensure that more working-class, immigrant, and historically marginalized voices are heard. We need a system that encourages participation and accountability—not one that protects incumbency. This reform is long overdue.

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

Comments (optional)

Yes, I fully commit to requesting a public hearing for NYC Board of Elections nominees and to only supporting individuals who are publicly and clearly committed to reform. The BOE has long been plagued by dysfunction, lack of transparency, and patronage-driven hiring that undermines public trust in our elections. As a City Council Member, I would not rubber-stamp appointments made behind closed doors. Voters deserve accountability, and that starts with ensuring BOE commissioners are chosen through an open, public process and are committed to professionalizing the agency, reducing political patronage, and implementing fair, open hiring practices. The integrity of our democracy depends on it.

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

Comments (optional)

Yes, I support an open primary system in New York City. Our current closed primary structure shuts out too many voters—especially independents and unaffiliated voters—who make up a growing portion of the electorate. In a city where important races are often decided in the primary, excluding so many voices from that process undermines democracy and leaves communities feeling disengaged and disempowered. Shifting to an open primary system, where all registered voters can participate and the top two candidates move on to the general election regardless of party, would increase voter turnout, encourage broader civic engagement, and lead to a

more representative government. It's time we modernize our elections and put the power back in the hands of all New Yorkers.

*** 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 believe that making voting as accessible as possible is essential to a healthy democracy. That's why I support automatic voter registration, particularly for young people turning 18, so they're engaged and ready to participate as soon as they're eligible.

I also believe that every interaction with a city agency should be a chance to register or update voter information—whether someone is applying for housing, enrolling a child in school, visiting a public hospital, or accessing other essential services.

In addition, I support more robust voter education efforts, especially around ranked choice voting, and expanding early voting sites in underrepresented communities like District 8. These are common-sense reforms that bring more people into the process and ensure every voice is heard.

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've worked firsthand to strengthen New York City's campaign finance system and make it more equitable and accessible for grassroots candidates. While serving as Legislative Director for former Council Member Ben Kallos, I helped draft and pass key legislation that reshaped the system to reduce the influence of big money in local politics.

One of the most significant achievements was helping pass Local Law 1 of 2019, which made the 8-to-1 public matching funds program retroactive to the start of the 2021 election cycle—forcing candidates who had taken large contributions to return over-the-limit donations. We also passed Local Law 128 of 2019, closing the “big dollar gap” and allowing candidates to receive the full public match, so grassroots campaigns could compete without relying on wealthy donors.

I also supported legislation to shut down so-called “zombie committees”—campaign accounts left open by former elected officials long after leaving office, often used to exert political influence without accountability.

Going forward, I will continue to advocate for a campaign finance system that levels the playing field, limits the influence of special interests, and ensures every New Yorker can run for office and have their

voice heard, regardless of wealth or connections.

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.

Maintaining the highest ethical standards in public office is non-negotiable. I've spent my entire career in public service grounded in transparency, accountability, and integrity—and I will carry those same values into the City Council.

As someone who helped pass major good government legislation while working at the Council, including campaign finance reforms and measures to eliminate political patronage, I understand the structural changes needed to build trust in government. But beyond policy, it comes down to how we lead.

I will run an office that is transparent in decision-making, accessible to the public, and committed to serving the people of District 8—not special interests or political insiders. That means publicly disclosing meetings with lobbyists and real estate developers, and creating clear constituent feedback channels to hold my office accountable.

Corruption and ethical failures erode faith in democracy. I'm running to restore that faith by leading with integrity every single day.

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've taken real, concrete steps to improve ethics and transparency in New York City government—and I plan to continue that work on the Council.

While serving as Legislative Director to former Council Member Ben Kallos, I helped draft and pass legislation aimed at cleaning up city government. That included measures to increase transparency in campaign finance, close loopholes around “zombie committees” that allowed former electeds to exert behind-the-scenes influence, and push for stricter enforcement of ethics rules.

I also worked on reforms to limit the sway of big donors in politics, helping ensure public financing could actually empower grassroots candidates—not just those backed by major contributors. These reforms weren’t just technical fixes—they were about restoring public trust in a system that too often puts insiders first.

If elected, I will advocate for stronger ethics enforcement, regular audits of city agencies and Council offices, and mandatory ethics training for all elected officials and staff. I’ll also push for more transparency in appointments, contracting, and discretionary funding to ensure government decisions are made in the public interest—not for political convenience.

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 Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) should have the final say on discipline within the New York Police Department.

True accountability requires independent oversight, and placing disciplinary authority solely in the hands of the Police Commissioner—who operates within the same system being reviewed—undermines public trust. The CCRB is specifically designed to investigate complaints of misconduct, and if we want to build real community trust in public safety, we must empower the board to not only recommend action but to enforce it.

This shift would help ensure transparency, reduce conflicts of interest, and signal to New Yorkers—especially those in over-policed communities—that misconduct will be taken seriously and addressed impartially.

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 the City Council’s advice and consent powers should be significantly expanded to include all Charter-named agencies and any mayoral appointee with significant policymaking authority.

New Yorkers deserve transparency and accountability from those who wield power on their behalf—especially those making decisions that shape citywide policies on housing, education, public safety, healthcare, and more. Requiring Council approval for these high-level appointments ensures a democratic check on executive power and gives the public a voice in the leadership of city agencies that affect their daily lives.

This isn't about partisanship—it's about balance, oversight, and protecting the integrity of our government. Strengthening the Council's role in this process is essential to a more responsive and representative city.

ADDITIONAL INFO

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

I'm running for City Council in District 8 because I believe our communities—East Harlem and the South Bronx—deserve bold, accountable, and compassionate leadership. I'm not a career politician; I'm a father, an attorney, and a lifelong tenant who has fought against displacement, organized with neighbors during a rent strike, and spent my career working to make government more fair, transparent, and effective.

I've worked in the City Council as a legislative director, where I helped pass major legislation on climate justice, campaign finance reform, and public health. I've also spent the last few years working directly in the shelter system, advocating for families experiencing housing instability, and serving on the boards of organizations like Metropolitan Hospital's Community Advisory Board and Union Settlement.

I'm proud to be running a people-powered campaign that rejects real estate money. We've built a diverse coalition of volunteers, community leaders, and working families who are committed to making District 8 more affordable, safer, and more just. I know what it's like to struggle with housing, to navigate city services, and to fight for the resources our neighborhoods deserve—because I've lived it.

This campaign isn't about ambition—it's about service. It's about building a city where our kids can grow up safe, our elders can age with dignity, and no one has to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. I'm ready to fight for that city.