

New York Coalition



For Open Government, Inc.

Advocating for timely access to information & meaningful citizen participation

www.nyopengov.org

Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Tom Suozzi

1) Enforcement of open government laws

In New York unlike other states, the only way to address compliance issues with open government laws is for a private citizen to retain an attorney. Connecticut has a government appointed commission with the power to mediate complaints and to impose fines on public bodies. In Massachusetts the state attorney general has the power to investigate complaints, order compliance, impose fines and sue public bodies that violate the law. There is no entity in NY that has the power to monitor compliance with open government laws and to impose sanctions for violations of the law. The New York State Committee on Open Government is a great resource but only has advisory power.

Do you support empowering the attorney general or some other entity with the ability to address compliance issues with open government laws?

Yes No Unsure

2) **Mandating public bodies to hear public comments at meetings**

New York's Open Meetings Law provides the public the right to observe their elected representatives conduct business but does not give them the right to speak and be heard. Many but not all municipal bodies provide the public the ability to speak at their meetings with a limit of a few minutes.

Eleven states mandate that an opportunity for the public to speak must be part of every meeting agenda. Public bodies that are subject to the Open Meetings Law should be required to hear from the public with appropriate limits before voting on items.

Do you support amending the Open Meetings Law to mandate that the public has a right to speak at meetings held by public bodies?

Yes No Unsure

3) **Prohibiting Encrypted Messaging Apps**

Some government officials are utilizing encrypted messaging apps that can automatically delete messages between users.

All communications by government officials concerning government business should be done through a government account where communications are preserved and subject to disclosure through the Freedom of Information Law.

Do you use an encrypted messaging app such as Signal, Wicker, WhatsApp etc?

Yes No Unsure

Do you support the enactment of legislation that prohibits government officials from using an encrypted messaging app?

Yes No Unsure