



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2024 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

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Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability:

1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?

I am seeking an endorsement from CBID because of the crucial part this club has played in the reform movement and its work on bringing transparency to the judicial selection process. Additionally, as a born-and-raised Park Sloper, I feel a kinship with this Park Slope focused club. I would love to spend my second term learning from CBID and working closely with the club on strategy.

2) Will you vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn to be Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party, if she seeks renomination? Please explain your answer.

I will absolutely NOT vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn to be Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party, because she has proven herself to only be interested in continuing the corrupt, machine culture of the Party, maintaining total power for a very small group of people at the top. I will only support a candidate for Chair who has committed to empowering and organizing with the most grassroots level of the Party.

3) What do you think are the most important responsibilities of a district leader?

The most important responsibilities of a district leader include voting on rules and vacancies in a way that promotes democracy within the party, including constituents most impacted by the legal system in selecting judges, building support for the Party within one's district, and providing one's constituents with opportunities to stay engaged in electoral politics.

4) What changes would you like to see in the operation of the county organization and its rules? What would you like to stay the same?

I would like to see almost everything about the operation of the County Party change. There should be more regular annual meetings, particularly of the County Committee but also of the Executive Committee. County Committee members (and other ordinary Democrats where possible) should have a say in most if not all decisions about the operation of the Party including rules, leadership, vacancies, and finances. The Party should have a platform that embodies progressive values. The Party should have an operational campaign account that supports local Democrats in general elections. We should have active Standing Committees that provide County Committee Members with meaningful opportunities to get involved in the Party. Basically, the only things that I think should stay the same are the existence of the County Committee and Executive Committee.

5) What, if any, groups or organizations will you not accept campaign contributions from?



I will not accept campaign contributions from the family members of judicial candidates, police, real estate, or corporate interests.

6) Do you support an active Assembly District Committee (ADC) in your Assembly District? Would you support an ADC that operates independently from AD leadership (Assembly member and/or District Leaders)?

Absolutely! My co-leader Aaron Ouyang and I worked to get an ADC up and running in our district last year, and now it is operating on its own. The ADC is one of the few opportunities that County Committee Members get to organize on their own, and they should be empowered to make it their own, separate from their district leaders and Assembly Member.

7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?

I support putting a limit on the number of proxy votes that an individual can hold. Currently, the ability to hold infinite proxies has made it so that one person can have more votes than all of the other people physically in the room combined, which distorts democracy. I believe that it is important to have proxy voting as an option, in the interest of making voting at Party meetings as accessible as possible, but it should not exist in a way that discourages participation and enables the few to assert their will over the many.

8) Do you support a party platform for the Brooklyn Democratic Party? If so, what two or three principal goals should be included in that platform?

The Brooklyn Democratic Party should have a platform, and it should be decided by the party membership. We should prioritize taking positions on particularly urgent issues like abortion rights, voting reform, and climate action. Any member should be able to propose a vote to add to or change the platform, and then there should be debate on all the different proposed stances within the party and a final vote on which specific goals the Brooklyn Democratic Party should include in its official platform.

9) How do you engage in your community now? How do you foresee engaging in your community as District Leader?

Currently, I engage in my community by attending local meetings, events, and rallies to stay up to date on issues of interest to my constituents; providing my constituents with political education and information through monthly newsletters and social media posts; and organizing opportunities for my community to get involved in local politics, including volunteer opportunities with crucial campaigns and organizing skills trainings. In my next term, I plan to continue engaging in my community in all of these ways at an increased level. Additionally, I plan to host more in-district canvasses and other opportunities for one-on-one meetings with constituents.

10) What is your position on the current land use and zoning struggles in your district?

The 52nd AD is one of the most expensive parts of Brooklyn. We need to create more housing here to keep up with the high demand. For that reason, I was cautiously supportive of the Gowanus rezoning, which is supposed to bring thousands of new units of housing affordable to low and middle income families into the



area. While I was growing up in the district, Gowanus was always a deserted industrial wasteland, and it has been great to see community and culture take off there. This rezoning must come with efforts to clean up the canal, fully fund repairs at the NYCHA developments in the area, and prepare the area for resilience in the face of the climate crisis. I will continue to push for these efforts, which were ultimately promised by the city, alongside my Gowanus neighbors and, in particular, directly impacted NYCHA tenants. Construction has already started on many new buildings in the area, and I will continue to pay attention to whether the so-called “affordable housing units” provide *real* affordability and push back where necessary. Additionally, I believe that the other neighborhoods in the 52nd need to help shoulder demand for more housing in the district as well, and I will support efforts to bring new deeply affordable housing to these areas, including rezonings, community land trusts, new tenant protections, and expansion of rent stabilized housing stock.

11) District Leaders and the Kings County Democratic Committee Executive Committee have the power to recommend commissioners and other staff hires to the Board of Elections. In what ways would you use your position as District Leader to increase transparency in the commissioner selection and hiring processes for the BOE, and professionalization of the BOE generally? What, if anything, would you do differently than your predecessor to ensure fairness and transparency in the hiring of poll workers?

I would only ever recommend anyone for employment with the Board of Elections after they have demonstrated qualification for the position and disclosed any conflicts of interest. I will make any requests for employment recommendation public and share any application materials with my constituents in my monthly newsletters. My constituents will then have the opportunity to comment on the application. When I do come to a decision, I will publicly announce that decision and explain my rationale behind it so that my constituents have a chance to hold me accountable to our values.

The 52nd AD is one of the districts where County has taken poll worker appointing duties away from the district leaders and given it to a BOE liaison as punishment for opposing the Chair. In addition to being a great offense to the impacted reform district leaders, the BOE liaison system is also confusing and frustrating to BOE administrators and potential poll workers alike. I will continue to speak out against these blacklistings and work alongside the other district leaders that have also lost their appointment abilities, organizing against the punishment and, ultimately, for a nonpartisan BOE.

If at any point in my next term I am able to regain the ability to appoint poll workers, I will put out a public call into the community to recruit new poll workers, just as my predecessor Jesse Pierce did. Beyond that, though, I will also work with local high schools to recruit 17 and 18 year olds to be poll workers, because most 17 year olds don't know that they are even eligible to work the polls, and I believe that our party should be doing more to civically engage young people.