



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2020 Federal 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 would be honored to have the endorsement of a progressive democratic club like CBID whose values are in line with mine.

2) If elected, what would be your top legislative priority in your first term?

- Oversight of the Trump Administration
- Enacting the DREAM Act
- Investigating the administration's treatment of undocumented immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border
- Funding NYCHA and dealing with the affordable housing crisis in NYC and the entire country
- Dealing with Climate Change - which is an existential threat to our planet
- Funding vital transportation infrastructure

3) Do you support the right of a pregnant person to choose to terminate their pregnancy? Have you always? If not, please explain why your position has changed.

Yes.

4) With Roe v. Wade at risk, do you plan to ensure adequate funding and legal protection to guarantee the right to accessible abortion and health services? If so, what actions will you take?

5) What is your position on the building of new oil or gas projects? What is your vision for expanding the nation's supply and transmission of renewable energy?

I am against the building of new oil and gas projects. And was an early supporter of the Green New Deal. I have also come out against local fossil fuel projects like the Williams fracked gas pipeline.

6) What health care reforms or plans do you support?

I am a supporter of Medicare for All.

7) The Census determines how critical resources and political power are distributed. NYS and NYC have historically been undercounted. What action can you take to ensure that New Yorkers, and in particular, members of immigrant communities, are counted? What outreach and educational activities do you have planned?



I am planning or organizing and hosting events in my district to do outreach for the census.

8) Voter ID laws, poll taxes, and limitations on polling sites and early voting are all examples of voter suppression tactics. Do you support actions to combat voter disenfranchisement? If so, please describe.

Yes. I have been a leader in Congress in this area. In particular in my committee I held hearings and we passed HR 4 on the floor of the House of Representatives.

H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019. H.R. 4 is comprehensive and much-needed legislation to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to its full vitality. This bill responds to the Supreme Court's disastrous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which effectively gutted the Act's most important enforcement mechanism—Section 5—which requires jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination in voting to obtain Justice Department or federal court approval before any changes to their voting laws can take effect. The Court struck down the coverage formula that determined which jurisdictions would be subject to preclearance, but it expressly said that Congress could 'draft another formula based on current conditions. That, among other things, is exactly what H.R. 4 does.

9) What steps do you support to reduce gun violence in the United States?

The House Judiciary Committee has passed a series of bills in this Congress to help respond to gun violence -- H.R. 1186, the Keep Americans Safe Act passed by a vote of 23-16; H.R. 1236, the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019, amended to also include provisions from H.R. 3076, the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act, passed by a vote of 22-16; and H.R. 2708, the Disarm Hate Act passed by a vote of 23-15.

Back in September 10, 2019. House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler issued the following statement on passage of these bills:

"Today's historic Committee passage of critical gun violence prevention legislation is a victory for all Americans. House Democrats continue to make gun violence prevention a top priority. Senate Republicans have failed to act on bipartisan gun safety bills already passed by the House. It's time for the Senate to finally act to pass bipartisan background check legislation and additional bills to help save lives."

H.R. 1186, the Keep Americans Safe Act passed by a vote of 23-16. The legislation, introduced by Rep. Ted Deutch, would ban high capacity ammunition magazines. These magazines are a critical feature that makes many assault weapons particularly lethal.

H.R. 1236, the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019 passed by a vote of 22-16. This legislation introduced by Rep. Salud Carbajal and amended to include

H.R. 3076, similar legislation by Rep. Lucy McBath, provides incentives through grants for states to adopt laws providing for Extreme Risk Protection Orders to prevent those deemed a risk to themselves or others from accessing firearms. The legislation also establishes a procedure for obtaining Extreme Risk Protection



Orders in federal court.

H.R.2708, the Disarm Hate Act passed by a vote of 23-15. The legislation, introduced by Rep. David Cicilline, includes those convicted of violent misdemeanor hate crimes in the list of categories of individuals who are prohibited from possessing firearms, and who would be prohibited from doing so through background checks.

On February 6, 2019, the House Judiciary Committee held a historic gun violence prevention hearing. [Watch here.](#)

On February 13, 2019, the House Judiciary Committee passed H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 by a vote of 23-15 and

H.R. 1112, the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019 by a vote of 21-14. The full House passed these bills on February 28, 2019.

10) What actions do you support to protect our immigrant neighbors?

I have been a leader on immigration issues my entire time in Congress. When the Trump Administration introduced the Muslim ban I along with my colleague Rep. Nydia Velazquez were one of the first to arrive at JFK to help those detained and protest the Trump Administration actions.

My committee has held hearings on the family separation at the border. I have visited the border at El Paso numerous times.

I have also introduced numerous pieces of legislation, to reform our immigration laws. I am a strong supporter of the Dream Act and Promise Act and lead this legislation through the House Judiciary Committee. The *Dream Act* and the *Promise Act*, which provide a permanent solution to Dreamers, recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and recipients of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). In my view, the Administration's decision to dismantle protections for Dreamers, TPS, and DED recipients have thrown families across our country into turmoil, fear, and uncertainty. These individuals are an essential part of our community, and they are critical to building an American future that is strong, united, and economically and socially vibrant.

From its earliest days to the present, I believe the Administration has pushed a cruel, anti-immigrant agenda that has undermined immigrants' rights, torn families apart, and forced communities to live under a cloud of fear and uncertainty. Passing legislation that provides permanent protection, and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, TPS and DED recipients, has been a top priority for me, and I am proud to have led the Committee in the historic step of passing this legislation and recommending it to the full House for passage.

11) What steps do you support to reform our criminal justice system?

I played a key role in the passage of the *First Step Act*, S. 756, in December 2019. <https://nadler.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=391438>



The bill makes a number of reforms to our federal sentencing laws. It establishes a new system to provide incentives to some federal prisoners to participate in programs that will reduce the risk that they will commit crimes once they are released.

The prison reform provisions in this bill are similar to those in H.R. 5682, the House-passed measure with the same name as this new bill. The bill includes provisions intended to address concerns that I, and many others, raised about the fairness of the new recidivism reduction system for federal prisons.

The bill establishes an Independent Review Committee of outside experts to assist the Justice Department in the development of the risk and needs assessment system that would determine the programming for inmates, their risk categories, and their eligibility for early entry into pre-release custody. Also, the bill expands the options for early pre-release custody to include supervised release.

The prison reform provisions of this bill also include a number of very positive changes, such as banning shackling of pregnant and postpartum inmates, fixing the calculation of time-off earned for good behavior, improving application of compassionate release, and providing other measures to improve the welfare of federal inmates.

In addition, the bill reauthorizes the Second Chance Act, a historically bipartisan effort to help ex-offenders successfully re-enter their communities after having served their time.

Critically, S. 756 would not only implement these reforms to our prison system, but it also takes a crucial first step toward addressing grave concerns about our sentencing laws, which have for years fed a national crisis of mass incarceration.

Among the sentencing reforms contained in this bill are:

- Expanding the existing safety valve to allow judges greater authority to sentence low-level, non-violent offenders below the mandatory minimum;
- Applying the crack cocaine sentence reductions from the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 retroactively;
- Reducing certain mandatory minimum sentences for recidivist drug offenders; and
- Stopping the unfair “stacking” of mandatory sentencing enhancements for certain repeat firearms offenders.

Although we must do far more to address the injustice of mandatory minimum sentences, and other policies that lead to mass incarceration, these changes recognize the fundamental unfairness of a system that imposes lengthy imprisonment that is not based on the facts and circumstances of each offender and each case.

This legislation is not the end of the discussion, it is an important first step in criminal justice reform on the federal level.

Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act (HR 3884).



Along with Senator Kamala Harris, I introduced in July 2019 the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act. It is one of the most comprehensive marijuana reform bills ever introduced in the U.S. Congress.

The *Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act* aims to correct the historical injustices of failed drug policies that have disproportionately impacted communities of color and low-income communities by requiring resentencing and expungement of prior convictions. This will create new opportunities for individuals as they work to advance their careers, education, and overall quality of life. Immigrants will also benefit from the *Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act*, as they will no longer be subject to deportation or citizenship denial based on even a minor marijuana offense. The *Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act* also ensures that all benefits in the law are available to juvenile offenders.

Despite the legalization of marijuana in states across the country, those with criminal convictions for marijuana still face second class citizenship. Their vote, access to education, employment, and housing are all negatively impacted. Racially motivated enforcement of marijuana laws has disproportionately impacted communities of color. It's past time to right this wrong nationwide and work to view marijuana use as an issue of personal choice and public health, not criminal behavior. I'm proud to sponsor the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act to decriminalize marijuana at the federal level, remove the needless burden of marijuana convictions on so many Americans, and invest in communities that have been disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs.

12) What policies do you support to ensure fairness in employment and workplace conditions, as well as strengthening and increasing access to unions?

I am a longtime supporter of unions and improvement in working place conditions. I have supported strikes and introduced legislation that provides for worker protections. Supported the fight for 15,

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 2694, the *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*. The bill creates an affirmative right to an accommodation rather than relying on a model of discrimination. Using the framework and language of the ADA, it requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant workers as long as the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship on the employer. These accommodations would be available for pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions, including lactation.

13) What would you do to ensure access to affordable and quality housing for everyone in Brooklyn and nationwide?

I have been a leader in Congress on affordable housing issues. I have garnered hundreds of millions of dollars for the Section 8 program.



I have been fighting for an increase in funding for NYCHA. And support legislation to vastly increase funding for public housing nationwide.

I have also been a leader year after year in funding an increase for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. HOPWA offers much-needed rent assistance to individuals with HIV/AIDS.

14) What, if any, groups or types of people will you not accept campaign contributions from? If so, please note whose money you will not accept.

I am not receiving any funding from fossil fuel companies.

15) What measures would you support to improve educational opportunities for all students in New York City? Please include how you would address the continued drop in Reading and Math scores and efforts to desegregate NYC schools.