



## Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2020 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Olanike Alabi

**Office Sought:** State Committeewoman / District Leader

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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 want to obtain the CBID endorsement because CBID continues to uphold and be a champion for progressive and democratic values/ideals such as transparency, accountability and inclusion.

**2) Will you vote for Frank Seddio to be Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party? Explain your decision.**

N/A - Frank Seddio officially stepped down as the Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party Jan. 2020.

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

- 1) Support/recommend progressive candidates for county committee along with legislative and judicial office
- 2) Advance election reforms
- 3) Champion social justice causes
- 4) Appointing poll workers who are capable, exercise professionalism and respect
- 5) Selecting a Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party who has a positive and progressive vision to move the Organization forward.
- 6) Advancing policies for the betterment of the county organization

**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?**

**Changes:** 1) Judicial Selection – A formal process must be established to select candidates for Civil and Supreme Court based on tenure, experience, merit, etc. 2) County Committee – We must commit to proxy and quorum reform at County Committee mtgs and establishing better thresholds 3) Increase the amount of county committee meetings held annually

**Stay the Same:** The county organization's commitment to diversity at every level is one that I believe should stay the same.

**5) 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.**

Real Estate PACs/Developers, Fossil Fuel, Fracking



**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)?**

Yes, I support an active Assembly District Committee in my Assembly District. In fact, I appeared as a keynote speaker at a recent meeting of an ADC in my Assembly District. Also, I would support an ADC that operates independently because for me it's about civic engagement and democracy.

**7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?**

- 1) Establishing a better threshold for a quorum at county committee meetings
- 2) The amount of proxies that a person can hold at meetings

**9) Do you support a non-binary option for District Leaders and County Committee members? Do you support removing all designations of gender for District Leaders and County Committee members?**

Yes, I support a non-binary option for District Leader and County Committee. Although I believe a proposal to remove all designations of gender for District Leaders and County Committee members has the potential to negatively impact gender equity, I strongly support gender identity and expression. The voting public has a right to know who candidates are, and candidates should be free to identify their "genuine" selves as "they" view themselves, irrespective of pre-set labels.

**10) 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 hosted a town hall meeting in October at which time the 2020 Census was an agenda item. The keynote speaker on the topic was a representative from the Center for Law & Justice at Medgar Evers College. To ensure New Yorkers are counted, I will continue to speak at tenant, civic and community meetings, and place extra emphasis on the topic for immigrant communities. I've also visited all of the senior centers in my district to educate attendees about the significance of the Census.

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

The current land use and zoning struggles in my district are largely centered around "as of right" private property and limited public/government property development. For example, Pacific Park (Barclays Arena) and the unfulfilled housing commitments. Others involve properties formally used as military or manufacturing/industrial sites in Crown Heights, which are now being converted to housing. Such struggles have resulted in luxury development, the lack of real affordable housing, gentrification, displacement and over development. Furthermore, they have affected the character of the neighborhood and are steps in the wrong direction.



12) 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?

Persons who seek to be commissioners and staff hires at the Board of Elections should meet with or appear before District Leaders and the Kings County Democratic Committee Executive Committee prior to being recommended for appointment. This would increase transparency through a critical examination and q and a. Additionally, several of the positions have been converted from discretionary to civil service and that's a step in the right direction as it ensures all candidates go thru a process where they are properly vetted. Lastly, to ensure fairness and transparency in the hiring of poll workers, I engage in a "meet and greet" or at a minimum have phone conversations with candidates to ensure they have a basic understanding of the role and responsibilities of being a poll worker combined with a commitment to respect for others and the democratic process.