



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2024 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Aaron Ouyang

Office Sought: 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'm running for reelection to continue the efforts to reform the Brooklyn Democratic Party. CBID has a rich history of being an independent reform voice in our neighborhoods for generations. Working together alongside CBID and tapping into the knowledge, experience and expertise the club has would be instrumental in the success of a County Wide reform movement.

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.

No, I did not vote for her last cycle and I don't plan on doing so this cycle. In particular, I find her lack of support for Democrats in battleground districts against Republicans in South Brooklyn disappointing.

Above all, a political party should be building up capacity and relationships to help retain and win more seats, this I believe is best achieved with new leadership.

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

Being a strong voice for reform in the party. The issues we face as a party are political. The only way to solve them is winning the political argument. That is both at the ballot boxes this summer, but also informing and getting the message out about how our political system and in particular our party could be better to every Brooklynite. I've been doing this since I was elected two years ago and will keep on fighting for reform.

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 a change in how we elect Judges and would be open to discussing how we could:

- 1) Empower Judicial Delegates more during the selection of Supreme Court Judges. As of now, they do not play a deciding factor in this decision. This is not the case in other areas across the country. I believe there should be some fact finding in this area to see how we can better support other volunteers who are also elected to their positions. We currently have hosted more forums and casual get togethers with Judicial Candidates but we can expand on this more.
- 2) Find more ways to give District Leaders, Judicial Delegates and the public more information about a Judicial Candidate's record on the merits. We currently have a screening committee that will designate a candidate as "Qualified" or "Not Qualified" but we receive no other information about their process. Finding some more information from this report could be an area to explore. Internally we



have also created an District Leader evaluation from the legal perspectives that we can expand upon in future cycles including the upcoming one.

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

I will focus my efforts on friends, family and people in the neighborhood. I will not accept money from special interest groups like those interested in real estate development.

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, we have an ADC in the 52nd currently. I've been an active member in starting it for the past three cycles. Our current model runs separately from our operations as District Leader, but we sit as ex-officio executive members to assist and give updates.

7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?

I would support limiting the number of proxies a single person could carry. I don't have any specific number in mind, but want to eliminate the situation where one person could carry hundreds of proxies and outweigh the voices in the room.

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?

Yes.

1. Campaigning against Republicans. This would mean not only building the network of volunteers and donors, during a campaign but also build stronger relationships outside of a campaign cycle that can deliver for citizens every day and get out the message of what our Democratic Party Officials are achieving in office and help build a strong bench for the next generation of leaders.
2. Coordinating with other County and State Democratic Parties - In Brooklyn, we are also State Committee Members and there isn't a strong formal structure with how we can support Democrats in neighboring Boroughs and throughout the State. Focusing on our message against Republicans can



also be a focus here.

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

This year, I'm an endorsed candidate by New Kings Democrats, Brooklyn Young Democrats, the Brooklyn Can't Wait Campaign and Independent Neighborhood Democrats. Being politically engaged is one of the primary responsibilities of being a District Leader.

Outside of that I help serve as a liaison where I can between elected officials and the government. For example, I helped establish my neighborhood block association and made sure our Block Association was connected to our Council Member's office regarding issues on the block.

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

I believe that there needs to be an increase in the number of housing units, but that also has to come with more social reforms that protect tenants. In general, I hope to see any laws that artificially restrict housing developments to be removed so there would be less barriers to building more. I also want to see things like Good Cause Eviction be enacted to protect the rights of tenants and protect the people that are currently in housing.

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?

Currently I do not have any of these powers as the Chair has assigned a liaison in the 52nd in place of this. This is something I don't support.

In regards to what we could do differently, I do believe that there should be election reforms passed in the Legislature. The Board of Elections shouldn't be a partisan institution, all the issues with the BOE seem from this fact. What we can do in the meantime is lean on our relationships with City Council Members in particular about enforcing professionalism with commissioner selection as they do hold a vote over that matter. Ultimately, this issue is a political one.