



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2024 State Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Jo Anne Simon **Office Sought:** Member of Assembly
Email Address: JoAnneSimon52ndAD@gmail.com **Phone Number:** 929-554-0028 (campaign)
Name of Person(s) completing the questionnaire: Jo Anne Simon/Susannah Pasquantonio

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

1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?

Having fought for increased transparency and reform of Brooklyn's Democratic Party since I became a District Leader in 2004, I have been quite active with CBID and a member for a long time, and it's endorsed candidate in many races. I value and respect CBID's work and it would be incredibly important to me to have your continued support. For some time, I was co-leader with Alan Fleishman, a founder of LID who was a very active CBID board member for many years, Chris Owens, a long time CBID member and former CBID president Josh Skaller.

I stood up to Vito Lopez when it was a tough time to be a reformer. We've come a long way from the days when I had to fight for rules reform and to co-chair the rules committee and opened it up to people who were not District Leaders and spearheading the establishment of the Independent Judicial Screening panel, which in addition to bringing rigor to the process, also increased the number of LGBTQ+ members and women serving on the panels that would evaluate who was qualified for County's endorsement. Having CBID members as partners in my reform efforts was and is extremely important to me.

CBID and IND and I have collaborated on many, many reform and social justice issues and I would be honored to have CBID's endorsement of my candidacy again and look forward to continued collaboration.

2) If elected, what would be your top legislative priorities?

1. Advancing literacy through my dyslexia and teacher preparation bills and through my participation in the Path Forward initiative.
2. Passing my Stop Polluter Handouts bill A.7949
3. Passing my school lockdown drills reform bill (w/Sen. Gounardes) A.6665
4. Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration threshold to .05 to establish DWI (w/Sen. Liu) A.1627
5. HESC/DALF student debt reimbursement program reform A1568C (w/Sen. Ramos)
6. Creating a wholesale prescription drug importation program A.7954 (w/Sen. Skoufis)

I passed my dyslexia screening in prisons bill last week. It awaits passage in the Senate (Myrie) as does my hospital closure bill (Kavanagh).



3) What measures would you support to improve educational opportunities for all students in New York State.

We need to ensure that the bulk of the remainder of Foundation Aid goes to public schools (the basis of the original law suit), not charters; increased inclusion of science of reading aligned materials and assessment; pass my bill A.4659 requiring at least three credits of science of reading aligned methods for prospective teachers; increase reimbursement rates throughout the system, including Early Intervention services; defeat food insecurity (which is a problem throughout the state); and my bill to both reduce the mandated number of school lockdown drills and institute non-traumatizing, age and disability appropriate best practices. We want our kids to be safe, but also to feel safe.

4) NYS previously passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. What are your priorities and what level of funding would you support to continue to fund this Act? Do you support the Climate Corporate Accountability Act? Yes.

There are many legislative efforts as advancing projects consistent with the CLCPA, including the extended producer responsibility act. I am pleased that the Governor addressed parts of the NY HEAT Act, but we need the whole enchilada. We very much need funding to pay for this year's shovel ready projects, and allocating The People's Justice Budget of \$1B to the state's Climate Action Fund in 2024 for critical climate, transportation, housing, and energy programs. This was developed by communities, for communities and is essential. We also need to pass the Climate Change Superfund Act and the Just Energy Transition Act as well as my Stop Polluter Handouts Act.

5) How do you propose getting same-day voter registration and universal absentee voting approved by voters in NY?

We need to pass the bills in two successive legislative sessions and lobby hard with voters for their approval, especially here in vote rich areas to make up for the redder areas of Bklyn and other parts of the state.

6) What, if any, groups, corporations, or other entities will you not accept campaign contributions from? If so, please note whose money you will not accept.

I have not accepted donations from big real estate, fossil fuel, charter school, or law enforcement industries because of the appearance of potential conflicts of interest.

7) How do you plan on supporting the NYS Equal Rights Act, which will be on the ballot in November 2024?

Full throatedly! I plan to engage with others to educate the public locally and capitalize on expected high turnout in this presidential year in vote rich AD 52 which will help balance out lower turnout areas and redder districts.



8) Do you support the Invest in Our New York set of bills? Are there some bills you support and others that you do not? If so, please explain.

Yes, I have been a member of the revenue raising working group. I believe I sponsor all of the bills but of course, some are more likely to pass than others. I personally like the stock transfer tax bill (we already have the mechanism to renew collecting this minimal tax that would raise significant revenue) which enjoys less support for some reason but hope springs eternal!

9) Now that the Reproductive Health Act has passed, what is your next priority in increasing reproductive healthcare access and gender equity, not only in NYS but nation-wide?

Fighting for medication abortion access, abortion access funding, passage of the Equality amendment in November, and figuring out a way to educate the public to recognize the disempowering and disheartening influence of negative abortion propaganda disseminated by the so-called crisis pregnancy centers.

10) What actions would you take to promote safer and more efficient transportation options for pedestrians, cyclists, mass transit users, and drivers in New York?

Pass the bills in the safe streets package, including Sammy's Law. Pass my BAC .05 bill and the ignition interlock bill carried by A/M Carrie Woerner, and pass my bill to prohibit delivery apps to promise delivery in under 30 minutes, which helps drive the use of sidewalks by e-bike drivers. We have been working with City DOT to improve street safety on Atlantic Ave and are hopeful they will install mid-block crossings in key locations along the stretch between Hicks Street and Nevins.

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

I have requested to become assume the lead sponsorship of the Empire Worker Protection Act which will make a huge difference, we are also fighting to have project labor agreements for infrastructure projects at SUNY campuses and to pass my bill to eliminate wage theft.

12) What would you do to ensure access to affordable and quality housing for everyone?

A few things come to mind: Residential conversions of commercial properties; tax credit program with mandated affordability of more than what is currently required under mandatory inclusionary zoning, which isn't enough to make a dent in the need; increase access to capital for not-for-profit housing developers who can build without big profit margins, allowing for more and more deeply affordable units to be built; preserve the affordable units we have; create a new Mitchell Lama -type housing program; increase production of supported housing. I was heartened by the Governor's support in her State of the State address for affordable housing as part of a tax credit program. Obviously, good cause eviction is also key to keeping people in their homes.



13) What are your views on criminal justice reform issues, such as (but not limited to) police accountability and ending solitary confinement?

I have been a strong voice for criminal justice reforms in the legislature (including bail reform, discovery) and fought hard for the passage of Clean Slate. I support the Justice Roadmap, was a long-time sponsor of the HALT Act to eliminate solitary confinement, and to repeal 50a of the civil service law which protected law enforcement and firefighters from having to disclose personnel records in legal proceedings. I have cosponsored Elder Parole and Fair and Timely Parole and the bill to eliminate mandatory minimums for years. I am fighting to pass my bill A.1699 which has broad support, and which would quickly provide psych evaluations to for seriously mentally ill people arrested for minor violations, to inform conditions or release and access to both treatment and supported housing. I also believe that criminal justice reforms should be informed by opportunities to engage in restorative justice and educate people who are incarcerated. I am pleased the Governor reinstated ATP for those who are incarcerated, and hope that my bill to screen those who are incarcerated for being at risk for dyslexia and related learning disabilities passes the Senate this year.

14) Do you support the New York Health Act?

Yes, I have been a proud sponsor since I first took office in 2015.