

CBID March 25, 2021 Meeting

Link to recording of meeting: <https://www.facebook.com/8640614098/videos/475163130490530>

Intro remarks

- This is our twelfth meeting over Zoom! We've learned a lot and made it work.
- We endorsed some great candidates <https://www.cbidems.org/endorsements>
 - o Shahana Hanif for New York City Council, D39
 - o Jo Anne Simon for Brooklyn Borough President
 - o Scott Stringer for Mayor
 - o Brad Lander for Comptroller
 - o Jumaane Williams for Public Advocate
 - o Rosemarie Montalbano for Surrogate's Court
 - o Heela Capell for Countywide Judge
 - o Sharen Hudson for Countywide Judge
 - o Lincoln Restler for New York City Council, D33
- We petitioned for several of our candidates in March, and everyone is now on the ballot
- Time to volunteer!
 - o Phonebanking
 - o In-person door-knocking
 - o Scott Stringer
 - <https://www.mobilize.us/stringerformayor/>
 - <https://www.mobilize.us/stringerformayor/event/372590/>
 - o Shahana Hanif
 - Weekend of Action, including in-person canvassing (outside-only, no apartment buildings, socially distanced, wearing masks)
<https://www.mobilize.us/shahanafrombk/event/379439/>
 - Phonebanking, including shift run by Allison Mingus and Ben Theodore
<https://www.mobilize.us/shahanafrombk/event/377290/>

Committee Updates

- Women's Caucus (Nicole C.): On March 16, the Women's Caucus hosted a successful event, moderated by L. Joy Williams, in which two CBID-endorsed candidates, Shahana Hanif, who is running for Council District 39, and Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon, who is running for Brooklyn Borough President, discussed what it means to run a feminist campaign. Over 40 people attended this virtual event. Big thank you to CBID member Megan Piontkowski for creating the beautiful event flier! The Women's Caucus looks forward to hosting more events spotlighting our endorsed female candidates. Stay tuned!
- Environmental Committee (Alice):
 - o Fight for Sunlight through Brooklyn Botanic Garden
 - Prepared testimony for the ULURP hearing
 - Suit against developer → canceled March hearing
 - BBG asked CBID to send testimony, which ex comm approved
<https://www.cbidems.org/resolutions-1/cbid-climate-committee-statement-in-support-of-brooklyn-botanic-gardens-fight-for-sunlight-campaign>

- Sent 17 hardcopies to elected officials and city planners
 - https://www.bbg.org/support/save_the_sunlight_oppose_rezoning
 - No North Brooklyn Pipeline
 - Greenpoint energy center
 - Joanne B. developed testimony
 - DEC and National Grid were sued by a local resident council
 - NG tried to segment the project so that they did not have to conduct an overall environmental study, so they were sued on that basis
 - DEC was sued for not doing its job regarding assessing impact on environmental justice communities
 - Local Law 97
 - Law is to encourage large buildings to implement carbon caps
 - Loophole in the state law, which state has just closed – thanks, Jo Anne Simon and Bobby Carroll and CBID members who made calls on this!
 - Climate, Jobs, and Justice Action Week
 - Rallies, social media actions making sure climate bill passed by the state will be implemented
 - Climate, Jobs, and Justice Action Week Kickoff Call: https://actionnetwork.org/events/climate-jobs-and-justice-action-week-kick-off-call?clear_id=true
 - Brooklyn for Peace is hosting a Climate Crisis Virtual Forum on March 31
 - https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwoc-qqrjMsG9AFefg-C6L2yVHtS_7Rieu?fbclid=IwAR1Q1ujETCfNtl83ydHosuhdiCMPfjAqbBorTUArXdZDdTj8FzkLm1qnGHM
 - This group is a friend to CBID
- County Committee Committee (Joe C.):
 - Formed in December 2020 after the 24-hour County Committee meeting
 - Purposes
 - Keep club abreast of County Committee news
 - Consider reforms to County rules
 - Recruitment: CCC wants to recruit new CC members
 - We want to start recruiting later this year
 - By this time next year (early 2022), petitioning will be over for hopeful County Committee members!
 - CCC will form a network with other reform clubs and organizations in Brooklyn to see what we can accomplish as a consortium with respect to CC reform, getting people to run for CC, and looking at District Leader races in 2022
 - Recap on Kings County Democratic Party refusing to recertify Brooklyn Young Democrats
 - BYD = independent club but also official youth arm of KCDP
 - BYD needs to have charter renewed every two years
 - Pro forma process in the past
 - Part of process = county chair must sign off on a letter to bless the charter for the new year

- This year, Chair Bichotte Hermelyn reneged on agreement to sign off on the certification letter to certify the charter
 - Chair B.H. issued a notice of derecognition
 - BYD will appeal to the state young democrats committee to have them recharter BYD for the new year and disregard what county has done
 - State can charter them if county will not
 - BYD is not going anywhere
- Policy Committee (Erica)
 - We now have a policy committee!
 - Ex comm created a form so members can designate which issues they are interested in working on and/or hearing more about
 - Fill out the form here:
 - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSco_zPJ5RDp4GjdQ4upFxE-ePCXgC2aCP7bClTTOjY_VMsjmQ/viewform
 - Ask Erica questions: ericacbid@gmail.com

Policy Presentation: Invest in Our New York (Nick Martin):

- Intro to IONY
 - IONY: package of six bills that will end tax breaks on the wealthiest New Yorkers and will raise \$50 billion to invest in our towns, cities, healthcare, schools, teachers, transit, people with disabilities, essential workers, and youth
 - Statewide campaign around New York State budget to increase taxes on the wealthy to fund important priorities
 - The campaign encompasses dozens of organizations, like DSA, WFP, Make the Road NY, and a host of other groups
- Goals
 - The idea is that our needs in the state are enormous and we need to raise a massive amount of revenue
 - New York has highest homelessness rate in the country, and these inequities were magnified by COVID
 - We want to address environmental crisis with a Green New Deal for New York State
- Tax policies and ability to pay for IONY
 - Although New York is an unequal state, it is also a wealthy state, so we can afford to pass IONY
 - The only reason we can't afford it right now is because our tax and economic policies have been oriented around the wealthiest people in our state and not the rest of us
 - New York's economy is on the scale of Canada
 - On a per-person basis, New York is richer than Sweden and Denmark, which have robust social safety nets
 - Although our economy has been steadily growing for decades, all the benefits of New York's economy have accrued to the top 5% due to our regressive tax system
- IONY components: set of six bills that would raise \$50 billion of annual revenue and are divided into three basic categories that are underfunded right now. Three undertaxed entities:
 - High incomes: Tax capital gains at the same rate as wages

- Wealth: Inheritance tax and constitutional amendment in NYS to allow a tax on intangible wealth
- Tax on big business:
 - Small tax on financial transactions
 - Reverse on the state level the 2017 Trump tax cuts
- Where are we now?
 - Coming to the end of the budget cycle with a budget due date of April 1
 - Negotiations are ongoing among the governor, the speaker of the assembly, and the senate majority leader
 - Most of the IONY bills were included in the One House Budget, albeit in weaker forms than the coalition had hoped
 - Personal tax increase – not as aggressive as the coalition thinks is necessary to raise enough revenue to fully fund our schools, avoid cutting Medicaid, and address the pandemic
 - Phonebanking, canvassing, lit drops: getting the word out to get people to contact state legislators
- Link to website for more information: <https://taxtherichnys.com/>
- To ask questions: taxtherich@socialists.nyc
- Question: time is of the essence, so what are the best strategies to employ with roughly one week left in the process?
 - It is crunch time right now
 - Opaque, antidemocratic budget process
 - Negotiations = “three people in a room” (governor, senate majority leader, assembly speaker)
 - Goal: target the “three people” as well as those with influence in senate and assembly negotiations, especially the finance committee
 - Bobby Carroll provided Assembly perspective
 - There are three budgets: the governor’s budget, the assembly budget, and the senate budget
 - Only the governor can introduce a budget
 - Assembly and Senate raised roughly the same amount of revenue, which is somewhere between \$7 and 8 billion over the revenue the governor has proposed
 - Assembly and Senate has decided to fund rent relief, small business relief, relief for the arts, etc.
 - They will eventually reconcile, which will get them to a final number of how much revenue they will raise
 - Raising \$7 or 8 billion of revenue is a tremendous amount
 - The state budget, if you take out the federal funding, is \$106 billion
 - If we add \$7 or 8 billion to that, that is a significant sum
 - It is not enough in the sense of being done, but that is where it’s going to be
 - Bobby would focus CBID around: what is important to you? Ergo, we need to come up with funding for that: i.e., foundation aid for schools, MTA funding
 - Advocate for people and programs and things

- Question about how the American Rescue Plan and marijuana legalization affect the outlook of IONY: how can we counter the argument against a progressive tax, namely, that we aren't facing the enormous deficits we once did, and the economic recovery picture is no longer as dire?
 - o Things have shifted in a positive direction re: federal aid
 - o Federal aid is a stimulus/rescue package meant to be temporary and time-limited, meaning that it is unfortunately going to run out at some point
 - o To continue to fund the programs, while we do have some short-term needs, like needs of renters and excluded workers, a lot of the things we want in this budget are ongoing
 - o We have a lot of ongoing needs: fully funding public schools, building out green infrastructure
 - o ARP helps us plug holes but we need sustainable, year-to-year funding so programs can exist and can provide essential services for NYS

State of Albany with Assemblymember Robert Carroll and Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon

- Question: will Governor Cuomo actually tax the rich?
 - o Bobby is bullish that we will see meaningful taxes on the wealthy, mezzanine debt, capital gains
 - California will not raise a single tax this year, whereas NYS will, on the very wealthy
 - New budget is going to be well over \$200,000,000,000
 - Last year's budget was \$176 billion
 - Significant new resources from taxes
 - Impressive considering what the world looked like a couple months ago
 - Far from perfect and won't solve all ills but thinks we will get money for undocumented workers and schools and investments in green infrastructure
 - Believes Cuomo will present a budget containing real revenue raisers and relief for New Yorkers
 - o Jo Anne
 - Supports IONY
 - How do you raise the revenue and how do you sell it?
 - Governor was talking about revenue a while ago
 - We have some movement re the governor
 - We will restore most if not all of the cuts he proposed
 - We will have progressive income tax, address capital gains tax, mezzanine debt
 - Wealthy people do not take a lot in salary, so that's not taxable income
 - They get a lot of income/value in other ways, which is what the mezzanine debt bill is about
 - One bill in the package addresses financial transactions – this is a bit more complicated than it could be
 - Once we start with revenue raising, detractors will find out the world didn't end
 - Fighting for programs that work = not as esoteric = easier to sell than revenue raising
 - Gun violence prevention
 - Shoring up small businesses

- Rent relief
 - MTA
 - Funding climate change infrastructure and CCIA
 - My Brother's Keeper
- Not really three men in a room; really, it's staff
 - Governor, speaker, and majority leader are rarely in the same room at the same time
 - Budget secretary, head of ways and means, council to the speaker, negotiating team on the senate side
 - Negotiating team on sexual harassment law in HR law = women
- Advocacy
 - Be targeted and focused in your advocacy
 - At this stage of the game, sell your program and priority
 - Example: Jo Anne is advocating for disaggregated data to study violence targeting the Asian American community
- Question: Do we have any updates regarding the investigations of the various allegations against Governor Cuomo? Are we impeaching him?
 - Jo Anne
 - Once you start an investigation, you have to let them investigate
 - Assembly just hired their investigative team, which is a qualified outside firm
 - She knows one of the people on Tish's investigative team, Anne Clark, and believes we could not be better served than by having her in charge
 - She has confidence in both of those investigative teams
 - What is in the paper is not necessarily the whole picture
 - Some people wanted to impeach Cuomo on the nursing home issue
 - Others are now raising the issue of the bridge
 - Willing to bet that the AG has taken complaints from people who are not in the paper but want to tell their story
 - Assembly team likely has people coming to them to tell their story
 - What you don't want is everyone knowing what's going on in the investigation because that impairs the ability of the investigators to investigate
 - Believes we will go forward with a recommendation to impeach
 - Wants to know more about it than less
 - Wants to give the team time to do a good job so we know what we're doing and why we're doing it
 - Will not happen overnight
 - People are talking about refusing to cooperate with the investigators because people have drummed up the idea that the speaker is delaying
 - Speaker is not acting precipitously because he's being responsible
 - Has confidence in judiciary chair, Chuck Levine, and the team investigating
 - Wants the team to present the facts and a recommendation and we'll act accordingly
 - Bobby

- The allegations, especially the sexual harassment allegations, are of the utmost seriousness, but this isn't the second impeachment of Donald Trump where it was on videotape where we all knew exactly what had happened
 - We need to wait until the investigations are over and hopefully, they'll be over sooner rather than later
- How much revenue can the state expect from taxes on marijuana?
 - Bobby: \$350 million a year
 - Jo Anne: Assembly has not yet voted on that bill, but she expects that they will vote to pass it next week and that the governor will sign it into law
- Bobby on NY Public Power bills
 - Local Law 97, we will save, so that our largest, oldest buildings don't get a pass on retrofitting and leading our renewable standards that we set out in the CLCPA as well as the city council and the mayor setting out other standards to make our buildings green
 - Public power generally is a multilayered approach
 - He carries the bills; those will not be passed in the next week
 - State and municipalities need to look at what is the smartest way to get us to green energy and efficient/cheap energy
 - We pay the second-highest rates in America
 - Companies like Con Ed have market-driven forces that incentivize fracked natural gas powerplants and building more pipelines because it's good for their shareholders and bottom line
 - As a state, we should say, how can we get the incentives of the people to be taken into account?
 - We want to push the state into building a greener economy
 - Essence of public power is providing greener and cheaper energy than Con Edison
 - We can do this, but it will take some time
- Jo Anne on New York Health Act
 - NYHA will come to the floor in the Assembly, and it will pass
 - We have more NYHA sponsors in the Senate now, making it likelier that they will bring it to the floor there
 - Reach out to your upstate and Long Island friends and family
 - Look at who is on the bill and see if you know people who have a senator or assemblymember who is not on the bill
 - The more the public understands the bill, the more we will increase the groundswell of support for it
 - We may have a veto-proof majority in both houses on that bill
- Jo Anne on Kathy Hochul
 - Very active with women legislators and led the commission on women
 - We just passed the 100th anniversary of suffrage in New York and nationally
 - Hochul is progressive, smart, and works well with people
 - Jo Anne made phone calls for Kathy Hochul when she ran for Congress and flipped a very red seat, which she subsequently lost due to redistricting
 - She had the guts to do the right thing and vote for the Affordable Care Act, which is why she lost her seat

- She is someone we can trust to stick to her principles
- Jo Anne is a fan, and many women legislators are also fans and know her well
- Jo Anne also did a lot of work for her when she ran for Lieutenant Governor
- Role of LG is to effectuate governor's agenda
- Hochul is a strong and competent elected official
- We can have a lot of confidence in her if she becomes the governor
- There is a fundraiser for Jo Anne on April 5
- Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities for Jo Anne's campaign for Brooklyn Borough President

Eric Gonzalez for Brooklyn District Attorney

- Intro remarks
 - Running for his second term
 - CBID was the first political club he visited as a candidate
 - He ran for DA to continue the work he and Ken Thompson had done when he served as Ken Thompson's chief assistant
 - Years ago, the BKDA's office did not have the best reputation
 - Wrongful convictions
 - Abuse of power
 - He was committed to change
 - Cited positive statistics from 2016 to 2019
 - Reduced gun violence by nearly 40%
 - Homicide rate fell by a full third
 - In 2018, we had the fewest number of people murdered on the streets of Brooklyn in any of our lifetimes
 - In 2019, we had the fewest number of shootings
 - Showed that BKDA's office could be a progressive leader while also being effective
 - Worked hard to make Brooklyn safer and to ensure community trust in the justice system, which is equally important
 - Running for reelection with a clearer vision, more judgment, and better experience to lead us to a safer and fairer place
 - Works around the clock, tirelessly, keeping Brooklyn safe and fair
 - Addressed effects of the pandemic on crime rates
 - Gun violence surged in this county in 2020
 - Fifty percent of increase in gun violence happened between July and August
 - That is not going to happen again and there are ways to prevent that from happening
 - Indicator of the fact that we need to do more to provide safety
 - Ninety percent of the shootings in Brooklyn happened in five or six precincts – communities that are the poorest and occupied by communities of color
 - The pandemic exposed and laid bare the inequities in our city, from healthcare to economics, but it played out in criminal justice system
 - Mental health and substance use disorder centers were closed for a long time
 - Even when they were open, people felt disconnected from remote services

- Churches, schools, institutions we need and take for granted were closed
 - In wealthier communities, they figured out how to get things done. In poorer communities, things fell apart. That's why we saw the surge in gun violence
 - Stressed that this was not because of bail reform or discovery but because the institutions that collectively keep us safe and provide fairness in our system fell apart in our city
 - Will spend the next four years making sure the communities that most need those resources get them
 - Violence interrupters didn't have PPE and weren't getting paid during the pandemic
 - The surge of gun violence is not the new normal
 - Pandemic showed us that law enforcement by itself isn't the solution to safety, it's our partnerships and working together collectively
 - Proud of work over the last four years
 - First DA to have a policy to protect immigrants from unfair deportations during plea and sentencing stages
 - First postconviction justice bureau, including over 150 parole letters
 - Put money into reentry
 - Done things no other DA has thought about doing in terms of progressive prosecution
 - A lot of the work we started in Brooklyn, whether non-prosecution of marijuana or non-prosecution of sex work, has been emulated and copied by other district attorneys
- What is his opinion with respect to the current bail reform law and to what extent has he been dealing with just convictions?
 - Early supporter of bail reform
 - In 2016, changed bail policy in BKDA's Office to prevent use of bail in every case
 - When he was a young prosecutor, he was basically told to ask for bail in every case, and it would be up to the judge
 - Changed default policies
 - Now, young prosecutors are required to write bail memos, which a supervisor reviews
 - Legislature started the ball moving and what we have today is better than nothing, but he wrote an op-ed saying we did not go far enough
 - We need to eliminate cash bail
 - If you have money (i.e., Harvey Weinstein), you can get out, whereas other people stay in because they don't have the money
 - We're a lot better than we were before but we aren't where we need to be
 - Postconviction justice bureau
 - First of its kind
 - Wrongful conviction unit, conviction review unit, clemency and parole unit, sealing unit, and second-chance unit
 - Wrongful conviction – in July 2020, he issued a report with the Innocence Project and a white-shoe law firm called 426 Years – groundbreaking report

- Looked at 25 wrongful convictions that his office vacated in the preceding four to five years
- Labeled 426 years because collectively that is what those 24 men and one woman served in jail
- 24 or 25 were either African American or Latino
- Three of the people exonerated never made it out of prison – they were posthumously exonerated
- The report did not get the attention it deserved because it came out during COVID
- It is now being used to litigate wrongful convictions throughout the court system
- Looks at root causes of wrongful convictions
- Innocence Project and law firm had unfettered access to BKDA's records
- We better understand the science behind witness identifications, false confessions, etc. now than we did when he started out as a prosecutor
- Continues to vacate wrongful convictions
- There are 2.2 million people in jail, so even if there is only a 2% wrongful conviction rate, that represents tens of thousands of people
- Has been involved in 29 vacatur, including 12 as DA
- There are one or two cases moving in that direction that should be coming this year
- Parole and clemency unit tries to get people commutation or clemency and has written 150 letters in the last year to the parole board actively encouraging them to release people who are ready to come home, and the BKDA's Office will work with them in reentry services to ensure they are situated and get the support they need to stay safe
- Believes his obligation to justice doesn't end when office secures a conviction
- One-third of people upstate serving 25 years or more are from Brooklyn, and they are his constituents. We need to get them back home to their families. Some people, many of whom are sick and none of whom pose a public safety threat, simply cannot get released because of the broken parole system.
- Quality-of-life and social disruption issues – noise complaints, drag racing, fireworks – we don't want the police involved but are there alternatives to solving these problems?
 - Police weaponize community and quality of life issues by saying there is nothing they can do because no one wants the police involved
 - People want fairness and to be treated equally and fairly
 - When you have things like 94% to 97% of the people arrested for smoking marijuana are Black and Latino, they understand unequal treatment
 - Police sometimes say there is nothing they can do unless they make an arrest, which is not accurate – they have access to services that can help
 - People sometimes don't call the police because it isn't what they want
 - We should make sure communities have the resources

- His office is trying to build a map of all community resources, so when people have noise complaint or quality of life issue, they know where to call – they are doing this in Bedford-Stuyvesant
- We all pay a lot of taxes and want to live in clean and safe communities
- We need to invest in community-based organizations
- A lot of this has to do with mental health and homelessness
- We need long-term investments in communities, particularly around mental health, to prevent hate crimes and racially motivated acts of violence
- His office will be announcing investments in Brownsville – restorative justice circles with young people to prevent violence from escalating and diversion straight from the precinct – will hand case over to community-based organization to provide services so they will never be subject to criminal records
 - Services matter
 - Connection to people in your own community
 - If you make the right connections to people who can support you, that's different from connecting with a social service agency that you may never see again
 - People providing the services should be your neighbors and people living in your community

Following club discussion and deliberation, CBID members unanimously voted to endorse Eric Gonzalez for Brooklyn District Attorney.