



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 State Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: David Alexis

Office Sought: State Senator, District 21

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Name of Person(s) completing the questionnaire: David Alexis, Michael Gsovski
(Volunteer)

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

1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?

I seek an endorsement from CBID because I am an Independent Democrat, too. I'm running against a longtime incumbent who has not delivered for the voters of our district and yet occupies a place as one of the leaders of the Democratic caucus in Albany. People know the work that you do, maintaining an independent political organization that is full of concerned citizens who keep a close eye on local politics, and when they see your endorsement, they will recognize that I am for real. When enough people see that, we will be able to keep building this people-powered campaign, win the primary and then we will get not just another vote for all of the progressive policies we support, but also we will get to send a message to all the other longtime incumbents who are not willing to listen to what the people want out of government.

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

My top legislative priority would be to address how hard it is for working people to afford to live in New York, especially now in this era of spiraling prices. My policies around housing and healthcare are designed specifically to either stop these price increases directly through regulation and/or to replace these goods with public alternatives, which if not eliminating the



private market altogether, like the New York Health Act, would at least provide competition that would force businesses to charge more honest prices with their customers.

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

I support building upon the work of the Alliance for Quality Education and other groups to equalize funding for public schools in our communities and give more state funds such as foundation aid to higher need schools, and further mandate that each public school have necessary support staff including a nurse and counselor. I would encourage the development of more community schools that work to provide social services, give students more practical experience of the world, and knit their surrounding communities closer together. I would resolutely oppose efforts to expand the numbers of Charter Schools, and would fully support efforts to make them more accountable to the communities they operate in, particularly when it comes to their labor practices, their use of public money and the often arbitrary and excessive discipline they apply to marginalized communities.

4) NYS previously passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. What are your priorities and what level of funding would you support to implement this Act? Do you support the Climate Can't Wait package?

As a state senator, I'll fight for state agencies to aggressively implement and fund the CLCPA (Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act), and I support the entire Climate can't wait package. It's a comprehensive platform for treating the climate crisis as seriously as it deserves. We can't negotiate with physics, and if we don't cut our emissions now we're going to pay a gigantic cost in the future. Since the federal government apparently can't do it, we should use our overwhelming majorities in New York to take these actions now.



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

The glib answer to this would be “actually campaign for it,” in contrast to what the state party did in the last election cycle, where the Republicans campaigned against these measures, then showed up to vote against the measures, and our side **didn’t**. I think putting the measures on the ballot in an election cycle with higher turnout among Democrats, such as a presidential election year, and then getting Democratic candidates up and down the ballot to promote the amendment, in the same way that the Republicans did last year would succeed where the last effort failed. I would be happy to be a leader in this effort.

6) 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.

My campaign is refusing all contributions from for-profit corporations and PACs established by them, real estate firms, their executives and their PACs, fossil fuel companies, their executives and their PACs, charter schools, their executives and their PACs, as well as associations of law enforcement officers and the PACs that represent them.

7) Do you support the work of the state’s Public Finance Commission? Do you support any campaign finance reforms in NY State? If so, please describe.

Our state is deluged in big money campaign spending by special interest groups, and it’s time for that to end. I resolutely support the work of the state’s public finance commission and find it indispensable in tracking the donors that my well-connected opponent has been racking up this cycle. They deserve all the resources necessary to do their jobs, and legal authority to identify where our politicians get their money from. I support any and all reforms necessary to make small dollar contributions, matched with public money, the primary way of fundraising, and support a funding stream of \$76 million to kickstart the state’s matching election funding system in 2024. I will be proud to be one of the first elected officials to sign up to take those



matching contributions. As someone who's rejected all the sources of funding described in question 6, it will certainly make life easier.

8) The Supreme Court has ruled that state legislatures can gerrymander political districts along partisan lines. How and by whom should political districts be drawn?

Political districts should ideally be drawn by impartial bodies of nonpoliticians making boundaries based on historical communities of interest and geography. I support efforts to build on the groundwork laid by prior reform efforts and to find a way to better include non-elected officials in producing a redistricting map, so the responsibility doesn't devolve to politicians with obvious conflicts of interest.

9) Now that the Reproductive Health Act has passed, what is your next priority in increasing reproductive healthcare access and gender equity?

I resolutely support the right of people to choose whether or not to become and stay pregnant. To make my unwavering support concrete, in Albany, I will fight for a mandate mandating that insurance companies that operate in the state cover abortion care, as per S7002/A7573, and banning so-called "crisis pregnancy centers," deceptive institutions that disguise themselves as abortion clinics and prevent people from obtaining real reproductive healthcare. I would also consider additional measures to fund abortion procedures for pregnant people who come to New York from states that ban abortion and would also immediately work to pass any legislation necessary to counter efforts from Republican-led states to retaliate against New York residents or visitors who seek abortions in our state. I will also fight for the New York Health Act and companion legislation which will ensure that all reproductive care—including abortion care, maternal care, and other reproductive care—is ultimately free and accessible for all New Yorkers.

As to Gender equity in the broader sense, I would make sure that the state human rights commission receives all the funding it needs to review claims, especially with regards to enforcing recently-passed state law provisions that enhance protections at work (i.e. reforming non disclosure agreements (S738/A5580), banning "no rehire" clauses in settlement agreements (S766/A2079), and including the state and all public employers as subject to the human rights law (S3395A/A2483B)). Additionally, I would pursue criminal justice reform so that transgender individuals would only be housed and treated according to their gender in correctional facilities (A7001A / S6677) and that the criminalization of sex



work, the consequences of which have always fallen heaviest on women and transgender individuals, would end (S3075/A849). I also would be in favor of a state level Equal Rights Amendment that would create a constitutional right protecting individuals from state action that discriminates on the basis of gender or gender expression on the strictest possible terms, but I am unaware of the current state of these efforts.

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?

As climate and air pollution has been one of my focuses in public life, I believe we need to vastly improve our infrastructure for all commuters, especially those relying on public transit. The first thing would be to aim to equalize mass transit funding and funding for private transit infrastructure. As part of the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA), we can provide subsidies to low income new yorkers to make transit affordable and build a ridership base across the state that can sustain its use. Ultimately, Public transit, like all public goods, should be free at the point of service, well-run, and fossil-fuel free. I will fight to eliminate fares for all public transit in the city, ensuring that no one is excluded from our public transit system for the “crime” of being poor. I’ll work to electrify our bus system and increase both the frequency and quality of bus service, by supporting an expanded network of bus-only lanes. I’ll also work to expand bike lanes and pedestrianization both in my district and throughout the state, ensuring that people taking advantage of the healthiest forms of transportation we have- biking and walking- don’t risk their lives from traffic violence. Finally, I’ll work to make sure the subway system is fully accessible to all people regardless of their physical ability, by finally generating funding to make every subway station accessible.



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

In the first instance, we must make sure we protect the rights of workers to organize to protect their own rights. The easiest thing we can do is to allow public sector unions to legally strike for their demands to be met by amending the “taylor law” that governs them in New York. The next thing we can do is broaden the recent success in allowing farm workers to unionize in New York by providing more opportunities for other categories of workers excluded by the NLRA from joining federally recognized unions to join unions recognized at the state level. Additionally, we can follow the lead of California and establish sectoral bargaining forums where employers in certain industries are bound to minimum terms and conditions for all their employees. And in a more transformative step, we can amend state laws and regulations to make it easier to form worker cooperatives, provide direct support to efforts to educate workers about this exciting way of claiming power over their work, and also direct entities like the economic development corporation to prioritize worker owned cooperatives in providing funding for new businesses.

Second, we can assist workers by increasing the minimum standards of employment for all workers across the state. We can raise the minimum wage and permanently index it to inflation so that future lawmakers don't have to tackle the issue whenever inflation reduces individual purchasing power. We can establish just cause protections against termination for all workers, where currently only union workers have access to them. And we can build on our current paid leave system to include more workers and give them more time off.

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

There is no substitute for an affordable, livable home. People in our district are drowning from out-of-control rising rents, struggle to find safe and affordable housing, and face harassment from their landlords when they advocate for their rights. This is especially true for low-income, Black and Brown people, who face additional housing struggles due to the legacy of redlining and other longstanding inequities. To ensure access to affordable and quality housing, I plan to: Give every renter the right to renew their lease by passing the Good Cause Eviction bill in Albany; Pass legislation to hold landlords accountable for repairs and upkeep without passing the costs on to tenants; give tenants the right to make the first offer when their building is up for sale, putting properties in the hands of the people and not luxury developers; end tax



breaks for luxury developers and ensure mortgage relief for small property owners; and fully fund NYCHA and provide rental assistance to homeless people so that every New Yorker is guaranteed a safe, dignified home.

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

Our policing, judicial, and prison systems have failed to protect all of our communities, especially Black and Brown communities. As a Black man, I've lived this reality personally. In 2013, I was pulled over at a traffic stop and arrested for alleged failure to have a registered drivers license. I did, in fact, have a registered drivers license, and was released several hours later when the police admitted their mistake. However, at that point, I had spent many hours of the night in a holding cell. Having seen how broken our carceral system is while in handcuffs, I am all the more committed to transformative change.

We cannot solve crime through carceral approaches. Instead of investing even more money in jails and police, which we know does not work, we must rather invest in violence prevention and interruption. By investing in our neighborhoods, housing, education, and healthcare systems (including mental health care), we can prevent the desperation that turns people towards violence. We must also invest in restorative justice approaches that repair and defuse hatred. In office, I will fight for anti-carceral solutions to crime and violence—priorities demanded by movements for justice across race and ethnicity—to ensure less people face prison in the first place.

To that end I will fight to pass the entire Justice Roadmap package, including Fair and Timely Parole, Elder Parole, and Treatment-Not-Jails, the End Predatory Court Fees Act and Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act. I believe the police should be held accountable and support ending qualified immunity and making CCRB discipline binding on police officers (S5252/A6012) so that police can no longer write their own rules about who has the privilege of patrolling our streets. I believe solitary confinement is a form of torture and should be ended immediately. Finally, I support the Clean Slate Act to automatically seal criminal records after people have served their time.

I'll also work to stop the rollback of existing criminal justice reform.



14) Do you support the New York Health Act?

Yes. I totally and unequivocally support the New York Health Act, which would establish single-payer healthcare for all New Yorkers. My wife suffers from sickle cell disease, and watching the profit-driven closure of our local hospital devastated my family and propelled me into healthcare activism. So many people in our district cannot access the healthcare they deserve. I believe it is vital that everyone have access to free, high quality medical care that puts residents' health and well-being first even if it's not profitable for wealthy shareholders. To push the bill forward, I will work with grassroots organizations to power map the legislature, identify what groups and issues are important to various colleagues, build strategic relationships and identify pressure points, and deploy an inside-outside strategy. I also intend to advocate for it in the same way that I advocated for mandating coverage of sickle cell treatment in 2018: by making the personal political and raising the harm lack of healthcare causes on an individual level. I will note that Kevin Parker, my incumbent opponent, despite cosponsoring the NY Health Act, has not shown the same level of commitment to supporting this issue that I intend to bring to the office. We need a fighter to make this bill a reality—not a passive supporter.