



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2020 State Candidate Questionnaire

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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?

My history with CBID goes back my entire life. My grandfather helped found the club and both my father and I were past Presidents of CBID. I have been active with CBID since I was a child and think of CBID as not only my political home, but a true beacon of independence and reform.

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

I was elected in 2016 and have made a host of issue core to my legislative agenda - including electoral and ethics reform, environmental conservation in the battle against climate change, criminal justice reform, street safety, ensuring that our schools, hospitals, disability services and public transit infrastructure have the funding and resources they need to succeed and thrive and quite a lot more.

3) What measures would you support to improve educational opportunities for all students in New York City? Please include how you would address the continued drop in Reading and Math scores and efforts to desegregate NYC schools.

Since I was elected in 2016 I have been working with NYC DOE, experts, advocates and colleagues in government to persuade DOE to screen all K-2 graders for dyslexia and to implement appropriate curriculum interventions so that all of our children can become fluent and fluid readers. Due to my efforts the DOE recently agreed to run at pilot program at two schools in my district to screen for dyslexia. As someone who is dyslexic and knows how important it was for me to be identified and to have the proper interventions implemented, I know that this will make a world of difference in the lives of countless young New Yorkers. In addition, I'm the main sponsor of A8786-A, which would create a legislative task force on dyslexia that would establish best practices for screening and curriculum interventions for dyslexic students and would then be adopted by the State Department of Education for all of New York State. This bill is at the top of my priority list this legislative session. .



4) What is your position on National Grid and the Williams Pipeline?

I led the effort in the Assembly to oppose the fracked gas williams transco pipeline and National Grid's self imposed gas moratorium. I circulated a series of letters in the Assembly calling on the Public Service Commission to reject National Grid's rate increase, testified in person in front the PSC and submitted testimony to oppose the Con Edison rate increase. Additionally, I have crafted three different pieces of legislation (A.8887, A8937 and A.8938) with NYC DSA and other activists to create a Downstate New York Power Authority and make our utilities public. These bills will be among my top priorities this legislative session.

5) NYS passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act this year. What is your position on the \$1 billion allocation which activists are requesting be put into the state budget this year?

I am proud to have written a portion of the CLCPA and been a co-sponsor on the bill. It was one of the great landmark achievements of 2019 - but there is a great deal more we have to do to green our environment, cut emissions and tackle emissions in our built world. I introduced the New York State Low Embodied Carbon Leadership Act, A8617-A which would establish a low embodied carbon procurement standard for concrete used in public construction projects that will rapidly incentivize emissions reductions throughout the concrete production process, and in the long term unlock concrete's potential as a net carbon sink that can permanently store emissions sourced from difficult to decarbonize industries and ultimately the ambient air.

6) Do you support universal voting in NY? Do you support codifying Governor Cuomo's executive order granting a conditional pardon to people on parole, thereby restoring their right to vote?

There's a ton we have to do to make sure more people are voting and that it's as easy as possible for people to vote. We should allow parolees to vote, obviously - but if we really want to get more people to vote we must deal with our onerous party enrollment rules. I have a bill to lower the party enrollment deadline to the constitutional minimum of 10 days. I have the same day registration constitutional amendment that passed last year but will need to pass again next year then be subject to a vote by the public for it to become law. I am also the main sponsor of the Young Voter Act which would lower the voting age to 16.

7) 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.

I don't take developer or corporate PAC money.



8) 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.

I was one of the only members of the entire legislature who stood up on the floor of the Assembly to speak out against the commission and to vote no on the budget because of it. I knew when the Governor, Assembly and Senate leadership cut a deal to put in the budget that it was a poison pill because it was going to keep big money at the heart of campaigns and that it would threaten third parties. I refused to play along with the commission and I wish that more colleagues would have done the same because if they did then we could have rejected it when they created it. The second it was created it was clear to me that it would never create the kind of small dollar matching system that many of us wanted. Sadly, I was right. This experience should be a lesson for elected officials, advocates and voters. We should not be creating commissions to make laws - that is what the legislature is for!

9) 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?

The Census is critical and it's extremely important that everyone is counted. I've recorded PSA's, sent multiple mailers district-wide and will be doing another next month. I'm sponsoring a Census fair the Prospect Park Alliance and others and will continue to do more to advocate for everyone to get counted.

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

District lines should be drawn by an independent commission and the process should not be controlled by party bosses and power brokers.

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

The Reproductive Health Act and Comprehensive Contraception Act were critical pieces of legislation to pass to protect women and women's health. I am proud to have co-sponsored them and will always stand up for a woman's right to choose. Crisis Pregnancy Centers are unlicensed clinics that target pregnant people and attempt to take away their right to choose and I will stand with advocates and others to oppose them this session and beyond.



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

I was a leading proponent for congestion pricing in the legislature. The billion + dedicated funding stream for the MTA will revitalize our mass transit system by improving our rolling stock, updating miles of signals and switches, making sure many more of our stations are accessible to all. I am a huge proponent of dedicated bus lanes, we need to do a lot more of what was done on 14th Street in Manhattan and on Church Avenue in my district. One of my bills to take drivers off the road who have a history of losing consciousness while driving was signed by the Governor in December 2019. We need more dedicated bike lanes, but more than that we need a real vision from the next mayor to truly create a transportation network for New York City that prioritizes public transit investment and other transportation alternatives.

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

I come from a strong union family and was a cleaner in 32 BJ buildings before going to law school so I know the power and importance of organized labor. All workers should have the opportunity to join a union and I will continue to work to support organizing efforts and to ensure fairness in the workplace.

14) What would you do to ensure access to affordable and quality housing for everyone in Brooklyn and statewide?

The Housing Stability and Support Act of 2019 was a landmark victory for tenants across New York. Ending the vacancy bonus and preferential rent and limiting MCIs and IAI's were historic achievements for tenants and I am proud to have been a co-sponsor on the legislation. As a result of this legislation, evictions have gone down considerably. That said, we have a city with 60,000 homeless and the city and state need to do more to provide long term housing solutions rather than simply short term shelter.

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

I support police accountability. I am glad we decriminalized marijuana last session, but we must legalize it this year. I am a co-sponsor on the HALT bill to end solitary confinement and first co-sponsor on RAPP bill to evaluate all inmates who are over 55 and served 15 years. But I think we should do far more - I have a bill A8613 which would give everyone the opportunity of parole after no more than 25 years and would eliminate the practices of consecutive sentences - no matter what their age. I think we need to reorient our thinking in this country around prison and incarceration. Keeping people in prison extremely costly in both financial and human terms and my bill would be strong positive step to turn back the culture of mass incarceration in this country.

