



## Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2021 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

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**Ivan/Carlos**

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

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

There is no issue that weighs as much on New Yorkers right now as health care. Amid this pandemic, access to quality care has been the dividing factor between those with the most and those with the least in our city. Millions of New Yorkers continue to go uninsured and underinsured. As the pandemic rages on, even more people lack adequate, culturally competent access to mental care. Our healthcare workers are underpaid, under resourced, and overworked. In order to guarantee dignity to all New Yorkers, to make sure our communities are healthier and safer, we must start by bridging the healthcare divide, destigmatizing mental health, and compensating the healthcare workers who keep our communities healthy and safe.

The next Mayor must commit to a municipal Green New Deal. Central to this plan are capital investments in green technologies which would stimulate our economy, create new jobs, and bring New York City into the 21st century. Additionally, this Mayor must guarantee a universal basic income (UBI) for all New Yorkers that will help give families purchasing power and a necessary lifeline, based upon the successful model of unemployment and stimulus that we have recently seen and accepted as necessary during Covid. Economic recovery cannot happen without economic equity, and that includes our immigrant communities and our small businesses and gig workers. As part of a municipal Green New Deal, we must support our community partners in the important work they do to strengthen city services.

2) What personal and/or professional experiences do you believe make you uniquely qualified to run for New York City Mayor? Attach resume or CV if desired.

Carlos Menchaca lives in Red Hook, Brooklyn and is a native of El Paso, Texas. The first in his family to attend college, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of San Francisco, where he studied performing arts and social justice. Carlos has lived in New York City since 2003 and worked on behalf of his community in local government for nearly 10 years. Since 2013, Carlos has represented New York City Council District 38, which is made up of the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Sunset Park, Red Hook, Greenwood Heights, and portions of Borough Park, Dyker Heights, and Windsor Terrace.

Carlos has distinguished himself as a leading voice for working families and immigrant communities across New York City. His strong opposition to the Industry City rezoning was a culmination of the advocacy against luxury development by community residents, business owners, and labor leaders. As chair of the Immigration Committee, Carlos has driven a city-wide agenda that prioritizes opportunities for the backbone of NYC's economy – service industry professionals.



Carlos's race for Mayor is a fight for the prosperity of New York City families as well as for all working families. New York City is not just at the forefront of entrepreneurship, but also of civic innovation, which is why Carlos is advocating for the nation's most comprehensive pilot on Universal Basic Income. The proposal would help increase families' purchasing power and a necessary lifeline, based upon the successful model of unemployment and stimulus that we have recently seen and accepted as necessary during Covid.

3) List all of your endorsements, including but not limited to elected officials, unions, political clubs and community-based organizations.

B.R.E.A.T.H. - Founded by Brandon Dasent and Joshua Turner, B.R.E.A.T.H.E seeks to combat systemic racism through creating and pushing comprehensive legislative solutions.

4) What, if any, groups or industries will you not accept campaign contributions from? If any, please note specifically whose money you will not accept.

NYC for Carlos does not accept funds from real estate developers.

5) How do you propose helping NYC recover from the COVID pandemic and resulting economic recession, particularly given the projected shortfall in city revenue?

We are currently seeing the worst pandemic since 1918, and it is no surprise that the international city that New York has become is unfortunately particularly vulnerable: we're New Yorkers, we brave the cold, we brave the heat and we brave the chaos to be together as a community. The next mayor of New York City must have the courage to lead through our current health crisis, while ensuring to minimize the unavoidable economic crisis it has brought. We know that the status-quo has been unable to address the issues that keep New Yorkers awake at night. Instead of bold policy to provide rent relief and fund our education and healthcare systems, our leaders continue to leave New Yorkers in the dark. Our next mayor must rise to the challenge as there is no other choice but to support our most vulnerable neighbors and lead our city out of this crisis alongside the experts.

Walking around our city, I have seen the traumatic effects of the pandemic in once-vibrant communities. Universally, New Yorkers feel left behind, while Wall Street executives and the top one percent have added to their bottom lines. I believe in New Yorkers' resilience, I saw it firsthand as an organizer during the Hurricane Sandy recovery. The current economic situation, however, will require bold leadership and intervention to help families who are struggling to make ends meet. We have not given New Yorkers a way to pay for rent, utilities, food, and basic necessities. The next mayor must strengthen our city's social safety net by creating new jobs, investing in green infrastructure and housing, and stimulating our local economies.

The next Mayor must commit to a municipal Green New Deal. Central to this plan are capital investments in green technologies which would stimulate our economy, create new jobs, and bring New York City into the 21st century. Additionally, this Mayor must guarantee a universal basic income (UBI) for all New Yorkers that will help give families purchasing power and a necessary lifeline, based upon the successful model of unemployment and stimulus that we



have recently seen and accepted as necessary during Covid. Economic recovery cannot happen without economic equity, and that includes our immigrant communities, our gig workers, and small businesses. As part of a municipal Green New Deal, we must support our community partners in the important work they do to strengthen city services.

6) What measures would you take to improve educational opportunities for all students in NYC? How do you plan to ensure that all NYC children are able to attend high-quality, integrated schools? Do you support D15's integration plan as it has been implemented? What changes, if any, would you make to the current D15 integration plan?

We must end school segregation. Full stop. Parents, educators, and, most importantly, children have been for too long neglected by the status-quo, failed leadership in our city. Calls for integrating the largest school system in the country have been met with toothless initiatives and task forces. As mayor, I will move to swiftly pass legislation that decouples property taxes from school funding. I will make it my mission to make sure that no student in NYC has fewer opportunities to learn and grow because of which zip code they were born in.

School segregation harms families working hard to achieve a better future for their children. Our city has been a beacon of opportunity for many generations. But, our public school system and those who justify it have stunted our communities' ability to achieve generational financial stability. So, yes, I support ending the SHSAT. The exam perpetuates segregated schools, poverty concentration, greater turnover of a less-experienced and a less-qualified teacher workforce, inadequate facilities and learning materials, and high dropout rates. Like gifted and talented tests and programs, which unfairly divert money and attention from neighborhood schools, the SHSAT sets up our youngest children and our future workforce to fail. The city that I know is courageous and kind, and would not let our four year olds' and 13 year olds' test scores uphold a cycle of poverty and of resource deprivation.

I look to my own district to see how communities have led with courage when elected officials have been unwilling to end the DOE's discriminatory policies. We have seen the universal positive effects on students when School District 15 achieved the city's greatest school integration victory. We stood against the De Blasio administration's status-quo policies and special interests who fought us against plans to eliminate middle school screenings and funding for integration planning. As Mayor, I will swiftly implement these reforms city-wide. It is time to prioritize the needs of our most vulnerable, our working families, and our communities of color like no other Mayor has done before. I know we can work together with our communities to turn the page on the policies and practices that affect racial imbalance and educational inequity across the city.

I do not have children of my own, but I know that children across the city are grappling with this pandemic and our decisions in ways we cannot yet fully understand. District to district, the inequity in our school system makes it impossible for some parents to truly choose between remote and in person learning. We are the largest school system in the country and we have a mayor who is making blanket policies. Education is not a one size fits all approach. We must give our children the ability to learn from each other and work together. We must also give our schools the resources and infrastructure updates they need to ensure every child has a fighting chance. If there ever was a time to invest in our children and our schools, the time is now.

Further, a better economy for our entrepreneurs and immigrants would not be complete without the next Mayor breaking the barriers to entry to good jobs and adult education is central to that. Opportunities for adults to continue



their education are central to making sure our workforce can achieve financial security and that our city can have a sustainable future.

7) How would you have handled the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 academic year? How would you prepare for a second wave of this pandemic? How would you propose to ensure that the needs of highly vulnerable children with special needs, who are homeless, come from poor families, and/or live in households without adults who could aid their learning are not left further behind when remote learning has to be relied on?

We are the largest school system in the country and we have a mayor and a chancellor who are making blanket policies. Education is not a one size fits all approach. With the most diverse school system in the nation, we are making a mistake every time we close schools based on city-wide percentages. Remote learning is not an effective way for our children to meet the best standard of learning. We must give our children the ability to learn from each other and work together and that means funding the most comprehensive COVID testing program possible. We must also give our schools the resources they need to ensure social distancing in the classrooms and other COVID safety guidelines. If there ever was a time to invest in our children and our schools, the time is now.

8) Do you support allowing non-citizen New York City residents to vote in City-based elections? Why or why not?

Yes. I am a sponsor of CM Rodriguez's bill because voting is a fundamental part of our democracy and of building a city that responds to the needs of everyone. We cannot be a city that suppresses democracy. Immigrants are contributing members of our society and we have to do our best to meet their needs, too.

9) Do you support any campaign finance reforms for NYC? If so, please describe.

Yes. I am open to reforms supported by good government groups. It is extremely imperative that we foster transparency and accountability to weed out corruption and pay-to-play in politics.

10) Now that the State government has passed the Reproductive Health Act, what steps would you have the Council and City Hall take to increase reproductive healthcare access, including maternal healthcare, and to do so equitably?

We have to fund our community partners and community health centers which are amazing resources to our neighborhoods. We have to make sure that the positive effects of this legislation is dispersed equitably throughout our communities. We know that outer boroughs and poorer communities lack adequate information and access to our best health care options. The city needs to step in where there are gaps and bring people into the know.

11) The MTA is facing a significant revenue shortfall and many parts of the city lack access to reliable public transportation. What measures would you implement and/or enforce, to promote safe, efficient, and accessible transportation options for mass transit users, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers in Brooklyn and in the City as a whole?



The pandemic has given us the opportunity to reimagine how we envision public space. Open streets for restaurants is just the beginning, and have been an important job source for working New Yorkers. We must continue supporting our restaurant owners and expanding access to public spaces to artists and entrepreneurs who are struggling to find space to perform and create. We need to stop thinking in the ways of the past and think about the future of our roads, sidewalks, and our environment. A way to propel us towards a safer city for pedestrians and cyclists is by expanding bus and cycling infrastructure. We also need to reduce policing in our communities overall, and that is especially clear in public spaces and transit spaces. Removing traffic enforcement from the police department is one move to get this done. As Mayor, I would dedicate a significant part of the city budget to building exclusive bus lanes that will allow New Yorkers to get to work on time. Obviously, we also need to work with our partners in Albany to make sure that there are no cuts to the MTA's capital budget and instead that we are using the full borrowing power of the city and state to support our MTA and the millions upon millions of low income New Yorkers, not to mention the entire economy, that relies on our train and bus system.

12) How would you ensure fairness in employment, salary, workplace conditions, and promotion? What is your position on strengthening and increasing access to union membership?

Fundamentally, I believe that in order to have a society and an economy that works for everyone, we need to separate healthcare and basic safety net protections from employment. Most people understand that tough times come for everyone, and the pandemic has made evident that healthcare is a fundamental right, so our government needs to be able to create a safety net that is easy to access and comprehensive so that the burden isn't on our small businesses to figure out how to pay for a labyrinth system of worker protections, but the responsibility is on our society to take care of its own and government to facilitate that.

I have supported every piece of legislation backed by the Freelancers, for example Local Law 172 on which I was a co-sponsor. I have stood at press conferences with the Freelancers to advocate for critical issues to gig economy workers. I have used my abilities and budget in the City Council to create opportunities for independent contractors to do business with the city.

13) How would you ensure that underserved communities receive fair and equitable treatment from city government? What policies do you support that would level the playing field for historically marginalized groups?

I have focused on workers who are not citizens, who are immigrants, the most vulnerable people in our city. That is why I have brought in the day laborers, worker cooperatives, delivery workers to the conversation about workers' rights.

14) What policy and practice changes are needed for NYC government to ensure sufficient quality housing that actually is affordable for existing residents in Brooklyn neighborhoods?

Housing is a human right, and we must treat it as such. Having grown up in public housing, I watched my mother struggle to make ends meet for me and my siblings. Just like mine was occasionally forced to, too many families in



New York are choosing to pay the rent over their next meal, keeping the lights on, and buying a metrocard: these are the difficult choices that can put a family, or an entire community, into a position that it will take years to recover from. Our current mayor's approach to housing is flawed and must be overhauled.

Our leaders have spent their entire careers championing a housing and land use system that puts the burden on communities to speak out against displacement. Housing market speculation has overtaken New York as a competitive sport where the winners make the most money and the losers are first time home buyers and low income renters. That time is over. We must structure housing policy as an investment in community. We cannot keep squeezing development through this flawed land use process. Developers have profited from it and will continue doing so if we follow the status quo. Investments in transportation, school seats, telecommunication and utility infrastructure must be part of the land use planning process.

The next Mayor must commit to fully funding public housing renewal and development, instead of turning to the private sector to increase housing supply for working families and the homeless. We cannot afford to fail to reform a system that ignores the most vulnerable. I know we can do better together, and our next mayor must do better.

15) What policies would you pass or enforce to ensure public housing/NYCHA repair, upkeep and security, and access to alternate housing and services when lacking essentials such as heat, gas and hot water? What is your position on "privatization" of public housing/NYCHA, and on City government sale of public housing "open areas" (outdoor seating & recreation plots) and air rights to private developers?

See above.

16) Given the City's Covid and post-Covid economic crisis, how would you approach your role in addressing the city's carceral system, including the plan to close Rikers?

We need to get detainees vaccinated. We need to close Rikers and stop the building of new jails, which will cost taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

16) Describe your vision for public safety in New York City? What, if any, functions would you like to see removed from the police department? What agencies assume the functions removed from the NYPD?

As Mayor, I will put an end to broken windows policing that has torn families and our city apart. We must address criminalization and over-policing of communities of color, as well as excessive force in otherwise harmless situations. Given that a vast percentage of public interactions with police involve minor offenses and harmless activities like sleeping in parks, possessing drugs, looking "suspicious" or having a mental health crisis, I will allocate funding to the city services that will address the issues of drug addiction, homelessness, workforce development, and mental illness directly. As mayor, the NYPD's entire \$8 billion budget will be under review for reallocation to the city agencies that will directly aid and heal our communities. That means investing in communities where we have seen an increase in gun violence, robbery, and abuse.



We must see crime exactly for what it is and what it means. We must depart from the old ways of management and policing which have failed us. We must move towards using good, reliable data, managing the performance of police officers by treating them with respect, listening to both employees and community members, working to solve problems and continuously seeking to improve public safety. We must renew confidence in our police department so that communities can feel safe and can work alongside our officers to tackle violent crime.

I will be Mayor to the entire New York City community, and that means being accountable to every single New Yorker. If I am accountable, the NYPD will also be held accountable. To that end, I will make police accountability a priority on day one of my administration and appoint a commissioner who is aligned with these reforms. I will work to pass legislation that forbids police with a record of misconduct from testifying in criminal court. I will make it a fireable offense to have body cameras turned off during interactions with the public and make compulsory the release of body camera footage. The next mayor must reestablish public trust in the system we hold accountable to keep us safe and that starts by listening to communities of color who have been the most affected by the lack of systemic accountability and the failed war on drugs.

17) Do you support changes to the ULURP process and to other NYC zoning mechanisms? If so, what specific changes do you support?

I support Speaker Corey Johnson's 10 year planning cycle land use proposal, and in fact, my office has worked very closely with the Speaker to make sure that the land use proposal is as inclusive as possible. The inclusion of a racial impact study is very important to me because we have seen land use be manipulated by developers to build housing that displaces our minority communities.

18) Do you have a plan to reduce and prevent homelessness in Brooklyn and NYC? Explain your plan.

See answer to question #14.