

## **Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 State Candidate Questionnaire**

**Name of Candidate:** Iwen Chu

**Office Sought:** State Senate District 27

**Email Address:** [Iwen@Iwenchu.com](mailto:Iwen@Iwenchu.com)

**Phone Number:**

**Name of Person(s) completing the questionnaire:**

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

### **1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?**

I would be honored to have the support of CBID. I believe we are natural partners and hold the same values. I have worked as Chief of Staff in NYS Assembly, focusing on bridging the gap between communities and Government. I am the President of Stars and Stripes and have worked dozens of campaigns. I have worked to elect democrats in Southern Brooklyn districts that have competitive general elections. I am a community board member and was a member of CEC. I am taking my experience as a Public School mom, Proud Asian American, community activist and public servant to the NYS Senate. I hope to work with CBID to keep our communities civically engaged.

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

Universal Childcare, New Deal for CUNY, Fighting Asian Hate Crimes

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

Education is a top priority for me. My daughter is in the process of applying to high schools. Education is a key issue for the Asian American community and many other immigrant communities. It is the path to a better future. I am going to fight for more investments and resources for our schools and teachers. We must support our youth, from Universal Childcare to a New Deal for CUNY. We must expand educational opportunities to all students. It's important to pass legislation to mandate a social worker and guidance counselor in every school. We need to focus on a child's entire education and wellbeing in the school setting.

### **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?**

I support the CLCPA and the Climate Can't Wait package because it will Improve the state's resiliency efforts and risks of climate change. Southern Brooklyn was hit hard by Superstorm Sandy and recently Hurricane Ida. We must take the fight against climate change seriously and aggressively. In the US, the greenhouse gas emissions caused by transportation take about 30% as the most major issue. Therefore, in funding priorities I would support continuing and expanding the Drive Clean Rebate, encouraging more electric vehicles to lower the greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, and also supporting renewable

energy. 2ndly, fighting for more resources for Public Housing energy updates and bringing back rebates or exemptions for our disadvantaged communities, working families, and small business to elevate the burden from increased energy costs.

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

The measure was voted down in 2021. I believe there was not a supported outreach effort. Many voters were not aware of what it is and misinformation was rampant in Southern Brooklyn. I would like more community input and an outreach strategy supported by the State. Voters should know about these proposals and go to the ballot box well informed. Universal absentee can help boost voter turnout and engagement. It will make voting accessible for seniors and people with disabilities.

**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 fundraising efforts are being supported by the Asian community and local residents. They have waited for this opportunity for a long time and are eager to help my campaign. I am grateful for the support I have gotten so far and hope to grow. I have not gotten and will not accept charter school interest groups.

**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.**

Yes, public financing can help diversify the candidate pool and also encourage more candidates to run for offices and not be tightened up by any interest groups. It will help the campaign to be a true grassroot and amplify people's voice. We saw in the 2021 City Council elections, how much the matching funds system can help elevate candidates. The City has the Campaign Finance Board to do strong oversight and required reporting from city level campaigns. I believe the State should develop a similar program because these are tax dollars and we need strong accountability. I do not agree with all of the recommendations by the Commission. For example, the Board recommends restricting matching donations to those from in the district. I do not agree with this because this harms candidates from low income districts that can not afford political donations. The City matching fund matches donations from all NYC residents and I am interested in a regional approach.

**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?**

I believe that the neighborhoods that share the same community interests, either in culture, language or religions should be drawn together. Districts should be drawn to empower communities and the process must involve vast community input.

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

It is great that the RHA was passed but there's a lot of work to be done to expand access and increase education around women's health. For example HPV causes cervical and other types of cancers. The HPV vaccine can prevent catching this virus yet many people of color and from the immigrant communities are still dying of these cancers. I am passionate about bringing reproductive health access to immigrant communities and low income communities across New York State. Oftentimes these communities don't have access to Primary care physicians or educational information on health.

**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?**

This is a huge issue for the entire community. Our current street design does not make it safe for our seniors, young people and people with disabilities. Fatal traffic accidents are occurring way too often and it is urgent we address this. Community members must have a direct voice in the design and planning of our streets. Our subways and buses need to be a big part of the solution. The current conditions of our public transit system are unacceptable; crumbling infrastructure, lack of ADA, and safety concerns. Drivers and cyclists (bikes/ebikes) need to have awareness and social responsibilities to understand their transportation tools can cause harm to pedestrians. Few days ago, an Asian woman got hit by an ebike on 19th ave and 76 st, she passed away. Now the Chinese community is very upset about this.

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

I support unionization efforts - I believe all workers should have the opportunity to join a union and have a greater collective voice.

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

I support legalizing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as they can provide an avenue to more affordable housing and have them follow safety regulations. This will help the State's housing crisis while giving homeowners a new source of income. Seniors benefit from legalizing ADUs because they can age in place and/or have income. It is very common to see Immigrant families crammed in shared housing. They have to wait to use the kitchen or take a shower - it is just not acceptable. It is a fire hazard and public health issue. ADU and state funded affordable housing will be a way to provide a solution.

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

In 2021, we can see the Anti Asian Hate Crime rate went up to nearly 400% and that is filed and investigated as hate crimes. Way too many cases in Asian community and Jewish

community were not able to be investigated or charged as hate crimes due to lack of evidence. But their fear is real and what these people want is no different from others. They want a fair criminal justice system. It is heartbreaking to see our asian community under attack and our seniors and our families are living in fear and afraid to walk out. With current law, these victim communities can't feel the justice is on their side and they are not protected by the law when they see the perpetrators are released without bail and back on the streets. In order to address their concerns, I am for amending the law by giving the judge the discretion to place bail on case by case basis, and for cases that are related to hate crime, any public endangered crime should be placed on bail.

**14) Do you support the New York Health Act?**

I believe that healthcare is a social responsibility, not a consumer product, nor a political policy. Simply because no one should go broke by paying their medical bill. If we cannot fix the overpriced medical services and prescription drug prices, then we will never have a healthy and affordable healthcare system that reaches every New Yorker. The cost of the standard health care practice compared to other first world countries is insanely overpriced. NY State should not be paying these irrational unit prices and not being able to use the funding to provide needed programs. I certainly do not want to see any waste of resources when we can shift it for many needed social benefits that would help our lower-income families and working families. I want to work in Albany to fix the pricing system and thus, health care would be much more affordable and single-payer system is achievable.