



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 District Leader 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?

The 52nd AD has a long history of being a reform AD and CBID has been instrumental in supporting reform candidates. I would be honored to continue this legacy with CBID's support.

2) Will you vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn to be Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party? Please explain your answer.

I hope we have a choice to vote for a reform-minded candidate for County chair, because I would like to have someone to vote for. But I cannot see myself voting for someone who has stripped out many of the basic democratic practices of the party – reducing the number of meetings, not allowing resolutions from the floor and more. We need a leader who believes in transparency, engagement, and accountability.

3) What do you think are the most important responsibilities of a district leader?

Our democracy works best when engaged at a local level.

- Helping to make sure poll sites are functioning and staffed well to assure that people have access to the polls.
- Making recommendations of judicial candidates to be voted on at the Judicial Convention. Assuring we have progressive and accountable judges will help all the people of Kings County, but especially those with the least access to resources.
- Being a check on the party leaders' influence and control of party apparatus is an ongoing effort that the Democratic clubs have been engaged in for decades, and I will continue that legacy, working toward processes that hold our party leader accountable to the people of our borough.
- Serving as a representative to the Kings County Democratic Committee's Executive Committee
- Service as a member of the NY State Democratic Committee
- Continuing to educate people on why voting matters, supporting Democratic candidates in other districts and getting people out to campaign for them, help spread the word about why voting for Democratic candidates matters.
- There are opportunities as well to influence policies & priorities of the State, through sharing what is happening on the ground with those elected legislators in our community and serving on our State Committee.

4) What changes would you like to see in the operation of the county organization and its rules? What would you like to stay the same?

- I'd like to see a good Executive Director hired for the county organization.
- Meetings should be held regularly (more than every 2 years!), with dates set far in advance, with agendas sent out a week before the meetings, with communication between meetings to allow for



input which would mean meetings could be run in a timely way.

- Meetings should be hybrid – both in person and online, and accessible by public transportation & car.
- I'd like to see transparency in meetings with a financial report given at each meeting.
- I'd like to see resolutions taken from the floor
- The County Committee members should be able to nominate their own Election Commissioner (right now handpicked by county chair)

5) What, if any, groups or organizations will you not accept campaign contributions from?

I would not accept campaign contributions from judges, from corporations or real estate developers.

6) Do you support an active Assembly District Committee (ADC) in your Assembly District? Would you support an ADC that operates independently from AD leadership (Assembly member and/or District Leaders)?

I participated this week in the ADC Forum for the district leader. I absolutely support an active ADC and believe that between the ADC, the DL's, and the Assembly Member, it will help bring more transparency to our democratic processes. I believe that there should be good and ongoing communication between the ADC, the DL's and the Assembly Member because at their best, we can all strengthen the work of each other.

7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?

I support the following proxy reforms:

- Limit number of proxies a person can have
- Allow for blanks to write in who the proxy should go to
- Have proxy default to the district leader and NOT the party leader
- Pre-notification to expect a proxy form to arrive
- Allow for electronic proxies

8) Do you support a party platform for the Brooklyn Democratic Party? If so, what two or three principal goals should be included in that platform?

I think it would be beneficial to take positions that could help push our work as a party forward. The State Party's platform includes reducing gun violence, criminal justice reform, fair & open elections, livable wages and much more. We should be prioritizing a party platform. Here are 3 goals that I believe should be included (of many):

Our public education system needs to be prioritized. Schools need continued funding for social emotional support for students, for arts & music not as an afterthought, but fully part of the curriculum, and for training students for the 21st century world we live in.

We need strong environmental policies & practices so that NY is a leader in the environmental and climate justice movement.



Just as the Democratic party nationally should be pushing for universal health care, the NY state democratic party should stand for universal health care.

10) How do you engage in your community now? How do you foresee engaging in your community as District Leader?

I'm involved in my community in many ways:

- I've lived in the district for the last 14 years and upon moving here, immediately got involved at IND, helping with petitioning, serving on county committee and as a judicial and alternate delegate.
- I have campaigned for many Democrats – in the 52nd, but also in other parts of Brooklyn. I also helped campaign for Barack Obama, for Hilary Clinton and for Joe Biden locally and in nearby states.
- I am a public school parent (elementary & middle school aged children) and was active in the PS 282 PTO for many years including as PTO Co-President. We have one of the most diverse schools in our neighborhood, and as the school was starting to change, I helped advocate for policies that would keep our school diverse. I helped fundraise for school programs and brought a music program into the school, supported by the PTO.
- I am an active member of Congregation Beth Elohim, and regularly bake, make deliveries and show up for families who have experienced a loss.
- I run a national not for profit that has a footprint in Brooklyn. We train up young Jews to work on social justice for their lives, and have three houses in Brooklyn for young activists working at local anti-poverty and social justice not-for-profits.

11) What is your position on the current land use and zoning struggles in your district?

Over the 14 years I have lived in Brooklyn, I have seen our neighborhoods grow in density, and seen our housing prices rise. I am concerned about the fact that private developers often get preference over maintenance of neighborhood culture. These high rises are not keeping prices down for housing which means families often need to leave Brooklyn when they have a first or second child. Any development that happens should focus on affordable housing, and with all development, there needs to be a plan around environment impact, and infrastructure that can support increases in population. In my Park Slope neighborhood, I watched high rises pop up along Fourth Avenue – not only did rents increase significantly with a concomitant displacement of many of our Puerto Rican neighbors, but there quickly was a problem with schools not having enough seats for the children within their zone. This can't be an afterthought, but needs to be fully part of any plan for development.

I believe that as we take on large projects, there needs to be coordination. The BQE is deteriorating and needs to be prioritized. And the Brooklyn House of Detention needs to be rebuilt as Rikers moves toward closing. Both of these projects are huge and without thoughtful planning and coordination, they will increase traffic, noise and pollution in our district.

I am excited to see more protected bus lanes and bike lanes citywide and want to continue to prioritize this for the 52nd AD.



12) District Leaders and the Kings County Democratic Committee Executive Committee have the power to recommend commissioners and other staff hires to the Board of Elections. In what ways would you use your position as District Leader to increase transparency in the commissioner selection and hiring processes for the BOE, and professionalization of the BOE generally? What, if anything, would you do differently than your predecessor to ensure fairness and transparency in the hiring of poll workers?

The BOE plays a crucial role in our democracy. That's why it's especially upsetting when we see the massive mistakes from the BOE, such as defective absentee ballots, machines breaking, purging voters, staff chosen almost entirely by party bosses.

I believe there is a need for a longer term fix that would professionalize the BOE, making the BOE non-partisan, so that qualified people could be hired for BOE jobs.

I believe we need to build a pipeline of poll workers. In order to do that well, we need the BOE to enforce the existing law of allowing flexible days/hours for poll workers so that they aren't working 16-17 hour days. In addition to flyer/online postings in schools & colleges, I'd like to help build out a campaign so that businesses and not for profits give people the a day off for civic engagement work of being a poll worker.