



## Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 Federal 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?

From day one we have focused on building the broad coalition needed to do more than flip New York's 11th Congressional district, but to truly deliver a victory for working class people. Since its founding, Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats has been doing this same work, prioritizing the needs of the underserved and underrepresented, because every individual should have an equal say in, access to participation in, our Democracy. Like CBID, we know the importance of electing leaders with integrity who dedicate themselves to a true life of service to the people. That's why, I believe, one of the core principles of our people-powered movement is the engagement of everyday, working people, because together, we can deliver real, lasting change for our communities.

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

I believe that our path towards a just society, one which implements systems of care begins for everyday people, begins by implementing systems of accountability for the corrupt and powerful. For far too long, our leaders have placed the interest of profits over planet and people in pursuit of the power of the dollar. In order to achieve universal healthcare, living wages, and a Green New Deal, in order to achieve climate, economic, and racial justice we must first be bold enough to imagine campaign finance reform which puts an end to the corruption that is not only allowed to exist in Washington D.C. and in every level of our politics, but is actively encouraged by our broken system.

Politicians must be banned from both trading and owning stocks, because Congress is a service position of service to the people, not a pocketbook padder or retirement plan. We need to ban corporate contributions, overturn Citizens United and, as we have done here in New York for state and local elections, implement matching funds so that working class people can bring our lives experiences into office.

These are just the first, most basic steps which we must begin to take if we are to both preserve our democracy and pass policies which lead with compassion and love for each other above all else.

### 3) Do you support the right of a pregnant person to choose to terminate their pregnancy? Have you always? If not, please explain why your position has changed.

Yes, I fully—and have always—support the right of pregnant persons to have autonomy over their own bodies, including the right to an abortion.

### 4) With Roe v. Wade at risk, do you plan to ensure adequate funding and legal protection to guarantee the right to accessible abortion and health services? If so, what actions will you take?

At a time when we are seeing women across this country vilified for attempting to exercise their basic right to healthcare, the need to pass legislation that enshrines Roe vs. Wade into law is a clear priority—we need to pass Rep. Barbara Lee's EACH Act of 2021. Rep. Peter Welch's Medicare Prescription Drug Price



Negotiation Act begins to lay the framework for the public to have power in demanding affordable access to life-saving medication, creating a negotiating process through Medicare. We also need investment in public health and crisis response agencies so they have the infrastructure to do robust proactive healthcare as well as respond quickly and effectively to epidemics.

**5) What is your position on the building of new oil or gas projects? What is your vision for expanding the nation's supply and transmission of renewable energy? Do you support the vision of a Green New Deal?**

My community is the most exposed portion of New York City; current projections show significant parts of Staten Island submerging underwater by 2050. This is a community that is still recovering from Hurricane Katrina and that was just hit by Hurricane Ida. I cannot stand idly by while climate disasters and the ongoing climate crisis take the lives and livelihoods of members of my community—predominantly Black and brown people—from us.

As a combat veteran, I believe we must take a comprehensive approach to national security that addresses the full scope of the threats we face. No longer can we fail to acknowledge the largest national security threat facing our generation today. Staten Island is still reeling from the effects of the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy nearly a decade after the fact. Our community suffers while corporate lobbyists search for financial gain on the backs of our veterans.

New York 11 - and the country as a whole - must band together to tackle these issues. We must pass legislation that tackles the full scope of the threat of climate change in order to prevent rising sea levels from overtaking the very streets we walk down every day. In Congress, I will focus on ensuring a future for the children of this country by addressing the most dire security needs of today. We will divest in a corporate military complex which chooses to exchange our health and climate security for profit margins by investing in green technology that sets the standard for the rest of the world. This investment ensures a livable future while ensuring that we have national, climate, and financial security.

**6) What health care reforms or plans do you support?**

We need to instill systems of care, not criminalization, within our communities. That begins by acknowledging that healthcare is a human right, starting with Rep. Pramilla Jayapal's Medicare for All act. If we want safe, healthy communities, then we have to come together to invest in services and approaches that center healing and restoration. We must place love and care for our neighbors at the forefront of our policy decisions. We must show compassion for the members of our community, not criminalize their humanity.

**7) Do you support repealing the Senate filibuster? If so, how will you use your platform to push for this reform?**



Yes, I strongly support abolishing the archaic Senate filibuster, which has been allowed to be used to uphold systems of oppression for far too long. As both a local and national organizer, I plan to do the work necessary to reach out to communities across New York 11 and across the country to do the political education necessary to demand change. By building a broad, diverse coalition of people calling for the repeal of this Senate **rule** that has been allowed to act as the modern Jim Crow we can begin to do the outreach needed across both chambers of Congress to demand change with the full backing of the power of the people.

**8) Voter ID laws, poll taxes, and limitations on polling sites and early voting are all examples of voter suppression tactics. What will you do to protect voting rights and elections, including but not limited to cosponsoring legislation?**

We are fortunate that the state of New York has prioritized combatting the voter suppression of the establishment and GOP. Recently, New York City took our efforts a step further by reinstating voting rights of legal permanent residents in municipal elections, rights which had been previously stripped away from vital members of our community. I am proud to say that a member of Team Brittany was on the frontlines of this fight in their work with the New York Immigration Coalition. Still, our current representative is working tirelessly to push false narratives and restrict the right to vote. Leadership needs to do more than abolish the filibuster, passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom To Vote Act. We need to establish election days as federal, state, and local holidays so that private corporations cannot restrict the rights to vote for their own profits. We need to expand the number of polling places, extend the deadline for mail-in and absentee balloting initiatives, as well as have translations available for every community.

**9) What steps do you support to reduce gun violence in the United States?**

End the ban on Gun Violence Research; Lifting the twenty years NRA ban on federal scientific research of gun violence by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Enable federal research on many forms of violence, and treat it as it should be treated: a public health issue. We can begin by passing common sense gun laws like universal background check, but also by addressing the root causes of the issue by funding wrap-around services and fully funding investments in our community. I also believe that means acknowledging and addressing the role our own State Department plays as the world's largest weapons dealer, contributing to gun violence on a far broader scale.

**10) What actions do you support to protect our immigrant neighbors?**

Our policies need to begin with the fundamental understanding that migration is a human right. We live in a society which praises the perks of cultural diversity while criminalizing the people seeking out the dream in which we're told America believes. To truly achieve justice for all, we need to address our needs both at home and abroad. That means abolishing ICE, passing universal healthcare and ensuring that every person—regardless of immigration status—is covered without the fear of deportation, and funding public



hospitals. It means fully restoring DACA and TPS, pathways to citizenship, and expanding worker protections regardless of status. It also means acknowledging and correcting our foreign policy, which is far too often driven by the profits of corporations at the expense of people abroad.

### 11) What steps do you support to reform our criminal justice system?

I believe in a just world that prioritizes compassion for our neighbor, which means working towards the end of mass criminalization and incarceration, working towards the end of caged peoples.

I find inspiration in the poem etched in the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." This nation has always been a home for people from all over the world. Far too often, corrupt politicians try to use immigrants as a scapegoat for problems created by government officials and our own foreign policy. I support full amnesty for all immigrants displaced and forced to this country through our own military and economic actions.

We must Abolish ICE, Abolish DHS, and put an end to immigrant detention centers while giving immigrants the same Constitutional rights that are afforded within our criminal justice system. Furthermore, we must investigate and hold liable any and all corrupt and cruel officials who have been part of a pattern of abuse and human experimentation while in the custody of the United States Government.

Immigration is not a crime, it's the fabric of our society.

We must address the root causes of poverty, raise the minimum wage to **at least \$15** per hour, and provide the resources necessary for the survival of our friends and family. Far too often are members of our community subjected to both literal and modern iterations of debtors prisons. We must not allow corporations to utilize high-interest rates and overdraft fees to penalize people for being poor. A just, equitable society is one that uplifts each other, not creates trillionaires on the backs of its citizens during the middle of a global pandemic.

Poverty does not breed criminality, it simply preaches the need for an equitable society.

In our own communities on Staten Island, heroin addiction has spun out of control. Combatting this crisis requires a multi-tiered approach that focuses on treatment, not punishment. We must acknowledge the effects of the racist war on drugs, remove the financial incentives that allow for companies to profit from the overprescription of painkillers, and treat drug addiction as a public health crisis.

Addiction is not an issue that is solvable by three walls and a jail cell door, it's a disease that must be treated like any other.

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



2020 proved - yet again - the need for a strong, union workforce that is focused on protecting the American worker. [Union workers make close to \\$10,000 per year more than their non-union counterparts](#). We must support our unions, the wages they fight for, the safe working conditions they demand, and the American way of life they allow. We must not stand-by as our unions [lose nearly 450,000 workers](#). Union membership in the public-sector is nearly 35 percent compared just over 6 percent in the private-sector. A Universal Jobs Guarantee will provide good paying jobs with worker protections.

I support the **PRO Act**, which will strengthen the bargaining power of workers by ensuring that corporations are forced to the negotiating table. The PRO Act ensures that workers are able to counteract the propaganda wings of corporations who utilize marketing strategies against their own employees in favor of ensuring their profit margins.

**13) What would you do to ensure access to affordable and quality housing for everyone in Brooklyn and nationwide?**

Growing up in a working-class, military family, I believed in the “American Bootstraps” story. Still, being biracial, I looked around from an early age and could see that the America my Black and Puerto Rican family was growing up in was different than that of my white family. My parents both worked multiple jobs, but still struggled to make ends meet. There were far too many nights growing up where we were forced to rely on the kindness of our church congregation to bring us groceries just to have food on the table and far too many days when we received notices hanging on our door.

In August of this year, our campaign staff was inspired by Congresswoman Bush’s bold leadership to join her in solidarity, camping out in front of our Republican, anti-tenant opponent’s office in protest. After spending the night in the pouring down rain, we organized a delegation to join Congresswoman Bush’s historic movement for the people on the steps of the Capitol building. That’s because for me, for us, this is personal.

We need to address housing as a human right. I would push for robust, well-funded, well-kept public housing investment. I believe that we can provide dignified, union jobs which provide a living wage by focusing on funding our housing. Raising the minimum wage, expanding and protecting every worker’s right to a union, and expanding baseline labor rights are other economic starters to address inequities that fuel housing insecurity.

We must also pass housing loan reforms, financial industry regulations, and reparations that would start to remove and undo the systemic barriers that have been established to keep Black, Indigenous, People of Color from accessing homeownership. We also need to pass a Tenants’ Bill of Rights, Good Cause eviction protections and continue to provide mortgage and rent relief beginning by focusing on those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic.

**14) 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.**



Our campaign is refusing corporate PAC money and money from people and PACS who are not values aligned, people-driven, people-powered entities.