



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 State Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Andrew Gounardes **Office Sought:** NYS Senate D22

Email Address: **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 have been a supporter of CBID for many years, both during and before my time in office. I hope to continue to build my relationship with the club, especially now that I will be representing communities closer to the CBID neighborhoods.

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

As always, my priorities are traffic/street safety, affordability, and workers rights.

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

I have consistently fought for increased funding for our public schools, so that all students have the opportunity to succeed. I am also the lead sponsor of the New Deal for CUNY which aims to transform CUNY into a world class urban public university and make it fully tuition free. Additionally, I have introduced legislation to ban legacy preference in college acceptances, so that we level the playing field for college applicants.

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 am proud that this year's budget allocated more than \$5B towards addressing our climate goals, but fully recognize that more needs to be done. I am a co-sponsor of many of the bills included in the Climate Can't Wait package, including the Fossil Fuel Subsidy Elimination Act, Climate and Community Investment Act, Cumulative Impacts Act, Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act, and the Renewable Capitol Act.

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

I have been a supporter of both for many years, and was proud to have voted on the constitutional amendments in the state legislature. Unfortunately, our state party did not put the work in to make sure that they passed on the ballot. I think there needs to be a state-wide campaign to inform the voters that these changes will increase access to democracy, and that right-wing rhetoric and propaganda to oppose it is based on lies. We did not do enough last time, and passed on an opportunity to improve democracy.



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.

In the past, I have had very competitive general elections and have been outspent by my GOP opponents or by special interests. My fundraising has and will continue to be focused on in district grass roots support. I understand that purpose to the question, but I believe a more appropriate measure of a candidate should be their in district support. As a candidate facing Republican opposition, I am not in a position to reject support before I know who my opponent will be or where their financial support is coming from.

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.

I have been a supporter of publicly financed elections and was happy to vote for this during my time in the legislature. I believe that the final result should be similar to the NYC system and am watching the commission's work and waiting to see some improvements on their process.

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 state's independent commission, when staffed with people who are non-partisan and have a will to get it done, would be a good framework for drawing district lines. While this constitutional amendment was done prior to my being in office, I do not think that it is in anyone's interest to have legislators drawing lines. Unfortunately, the commission did not come to a conclusion and it had to be done this way so that the lines were ready for the election season.

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

I think we need to continue to make sure that reproductive healthcare is accessible to everyone. I am proud that this year's state budget requires individual and group health plans to provide coverage for abortions without copayments, coinsurance, or annual deductibles. This will prevent New Yorkers who have state-regulated private insurance plans from having to pay hefty out-of-pocket expenses to get an abortion due to their health insurance provider not covering abortion care.

We also can be a beacon for other states by continuing to make it easy for people to come out of state to receive services.

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?

Improving pedestrian safety and promoting mass transit are two of my priorities. I was a staunch supporter of congestion pricing when it was up for a vote and continue to advocate for a full and robust plan. I have introduced multiple bills aimed to improve street safety, reform driving curriculum, and hold reckless drivers accountable.



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

One of my main priorities in office is to make workplaces more equitable and safer for everyone, and have worked hard to crack down on the sexual harassment and discrimination protection machine that our laws currently reinforce. We can continue to do more to make workplaces free for this behavior and tackle the issues that arise during settlements and trials. I have several pieces of legislation on this matter.

I also have been inspired by the recent union organizing campaigns across our state and support all workplaces rights to bargain. I have walked on several picket lines and continue to support workers who seek to form a union.

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

Making sure that our neighbors stay in their homes and are not prey to predatory landlords is of the utmost importance, but we need to be doing more to build more housing and make it truly affordable (which it has not been for years). I am supporting legislation to create ADU's in NYC and convert basement apartments into legal housing stock.

I have also been supportive of rental vouchers in the NYS budget and believe that this program is the best way to ensure that people on the verge of homelessness stay in their homes.

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

I support many pieces of legislation that have either been recently passed or are still being considered, including but not limited to, less is more, clean slate bill, treatment not jails, ending solitary confinement (HALT) and my own bill relating to preemptory challenges.

14) Do you support the New York Health Act?

Yes– I am a cosponsor of the legislation.