



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2024 State Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Andrew Gounardes

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Name of Person(s) completing the questionnaire: Andrew Gounardes

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 have always appreciated what the club has been on the forefront of fighting for democratic candidates in Brooklyn and advocating for their community. CBID members have always been critical volunteers for my campaigns, even before representing parts of the 44th AD, and I am glad that I have deepened my relationship with the club over this term.

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

Since being elected, I have prioritized street safety, affordability and worker protections.

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 a suite of legislation to transform higher education application processes including a bill 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 continue to fund this Act? Do you support the Climate Corporate Accountability Act?

I am proud that this year's budget allocated billions of dollars 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 NY Renews package and fully support the Climate Corporate Accountability Act. I believe we need to invest in our climate goals now, without delay.

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 and we have to go through this again. 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, corporations, or other entities will you not accept campaign contributions from? If so, please note whose money you will not accept.

My fundraising has and will continue to be focused on in-district grassroots support, and thankfully the state public finance system prioritizes this as well. I understand that purpose to the question, but I believe a more appropriate measure of a candidate should be their in district support. I have already qualified for the state matching funds and will continue to pursue in district individual donations.

7) How do you plan on supporting the NYS Equal Rights Act, which will be on the ballot in November 2024?

I am eager to use my general election campaign to help advance the NYS ERA and ensure its passage. In the past I have done public education campaigns to my constituents on ballot proposals and will do that again. I would be eager to partner with clubs, organizations and other grassroots groups to raise awareness for it and dispel GOP myths.

8) Do you support the Invest in Our New York set of bills? Are there some bills you support and others that you do not? If so, please explain.

I am a cosponsor of some of the IONY bills (capital gains tax and personal income tax). These co sponsorships predated my time as Chair of the Budget and Revenue Committee. As a rule, I have not actively signed into any other bills that are in my committee other than those I sponsor. I had this same rule when I chaired the Civil Service & Pension committee. That being said, I do support progressive taxation and revenue raisers but believe we should first audit and look into outdated givebacks, tax breaks and economic incentives that do not actually help our state. We should sunset those first, then we can see what programs need funding and find ways forward then. NYS gives a lot to corporations and businesses that do not result in any return for our communities and we should make sure to also seriously look at those programs.

9) Now that the Reproductive Health Act has passed, what is your next priority in increasing reproductive healthcare access and gender equity, not only in NYS but nation-wide?

I believe we can still strengthen abortion protections in our state, making sure providers have what they need, expanding access for patients to telehealth providers and increasing data protections and privacy. We



also need invest in different sources of funding to make abortion care more accessible by funding the abortion access fund. NYS should be a leader across our county and make sure that we remain a beacon for those who need abortions, especially as we've seen so many state outlaw them.

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?

Street and pedestrian safety is one of my number one priorities and I spend a great deal of time working on cracking down on reckless drivers but also advocating for street design that works for everyone. Currently I am working toward renewing and expanding the red light camera program as well as tackling reckless drivers with my legislation that would mandate ISA devices (speed regulators) into the vehicles of recidivist drivers.

Improving mass transit has been another priority of mine. Last year I led the charge to invest \$35 Million in the budget for frequency updates and my office will continue to fight for a fully funded mass transit system that is accessible and accountable to its riders.

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

I have been a member of the Labor committee for my entire time in the State Senate and have supported many bills to protect unions and their workers. During my time in the State Senate, I've also worked with advocates and employment lawyers to make our laws work better for those who experience harassment or discrimination in their workplaces.

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 support initiatives to create more housing, including but not limited to my own bill The Faith Based Affordable Housing Act that would ease zoning laws to help religious properties convert to affordable housing.

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. The state has to come up with a housing package this year to increase our housing stock, of all types, and include tenant protections.

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 peremptory challenges.

The perceived public safety “crisis” throughout NYC has nothing to do with bail reform and other criminal justice initiatives and the democratic party has allowed GOP talking points and lies to rule the day. We can not let false perceptions and NYPost headlines continue to chip away at the work we have done to create a more fair judicial system.

14) Do you support the New York Health Act?

Yes– I am a longtime cosponsor.