



## 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?

CBID has stood for good government. I am very proud to have earned your endorsement in the past for my progressive values and the quality of my leadership, and I would value it again. We share important history together, including fighting for women's rights, integrity in government, and the right to a clean environment. I will build on this history. In Congress, I will fight the epidemic of gun violence and the attack on abortion rights and voting rights. I will stand up against racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, and anti-Asian hate, and the Trump-inspired attack on our democracy. I will work to correct the lack of affordable housing and income inequality. I would welcome you as a partner in this effort.

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

There is no single priority – a member of Congress must work on many fronts at the same time and take advantage of opportunities to act as they arise. Thus, while I was working on the investigation of President Nixon, I uncovered the presence of Nazi war criminals in the US and began the effort to bring them to justice. For me, top priorities would include fighting for women's rights, fighting to end gun violence, protecting our democracy from attacks, fighting bigotry of all kinds, addressing climate change and rectifying income inequality. If Republicans take over the House, creating legislative solutions to address key priorities may be very difficult and so I am ready to work innovatively around Congress if necessary to create and fight for solutions to the proliferation of assault weapons and handguns, assaults by big oil and gas and other polluters on our environment, and other top progressive priorities. Deep understanding of economic and financial forces and how to harness them to achieve priorities is critical. As comptroller, I introduced what I believe was one of the first bills in the country to hold gun manufacturers liable, and that legislation was signed into law. Innovative solutions are imperative. As a candidate for Congress, one of my positions is that the federal government must use its purchasing power to the fullest extent possible to get gun manufacturers to ban the sale of automatic weapons and to limit the proliferation of handguns.

### 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.

I have vigorously advocated for abortion rights for not years, but decades. When abortion was illegal in New York State, I wrote an amicus brief with Carol Bellamy for abortion rights in a case heard by the State's highest court. Since then, I have continued to fight forcefully for abortion rights through writing articles, appearing and speaking at rallies, using my vote in Congress and the power of my other offices. And, of course, I have been a strong advocate for women's rights in general. When I called for the end of impunity for marital rape, I stood alone among the State's District Attorneys to do so; I persuaded the State's highest court to end it.

### 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?

I will fight to ensure appropriate federal funding and legal protection to guarantee this fundamental right. Since Congressional action may be difficult in the next Congress, I will also press the President to take steps to fight for accessible abortion and legal protection for women seeking them. My record of creating successful initiatives in this area is robust. As a member of the House Budget Committee, for instance, my examination of federal agency budgets led me to pioneer the so-called transfer amendment. This innovation allowed Congress to take money from the bloated military budget to fund urgent needs for healthcare and social services, jobs, and the environment. I am well-positioned to identify funds to tap for protecting rights to abortion and health services.



**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?**

We need to prioritize renewable energy seriously and vigorously, and block environmentally harmful projects as I did when the City had made plans to build a vast array of new incinerators to complement older ones, further degrading the environment. Faced with the catastrophe of climate change, we require urgent action. It is imperative to drastically limit fossil fuel projects and to robustly expand sources of renewable energy and the technology for efficiently transmitting it into our households, small businesses, office buildings, manufacturing plants, schools and centers of learning. These efforts will not only protect the environment and health, but also create good jobs. We need to study examples of successful efforts in the US and elsewhere, and invest not only in infrastructure, but also in basic science and research and development in the areas of efficient, low-cost energy storage and beyond. My track record on protecting the environment and the health of New Yorkers is strong. When as City Comptroller I was working with environmental groups, I led the effort to shut down the mayoral plan to build nine new incinerators. In the end, we defeated that plan and my work led to shutting down all existing incinerators as well. The vision of the Green New Deal, to arrest climate change and to develop new technologies that create new jobs, is laudable and important. I have taken on the powerful polluter forces before and will fight climate change.

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

Healthcare is a basic human right. The US has an inadequate healthcare system and one that shortchanges racial minorities. We must expand Medicare and provide for mental health, dental care, hearing aids, eyeglasses, and other basic health needs. I have fought and will fight for substantial improvements in healthcare in Congress. My robust record shows that I am not afraid to take on the insurance industry and big pharma, which have opposed healthcare reform. In Congress, for instance, my meeting with a constituent led to the first law on so-called orphan drugs and, ultimately, the development of hundreds of drugs for those suffering from rare diseases. As Comptroller, I forced the City to provide screening mammograms in municipal hospitals; afterwards, I worked with a member of Congress to get screening mammograms covered by Medicare.

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

Yes, and I will use my platform for publicizing specific examples of the concrete harm that the Senate filibuster has caused the American people: harm to their ability to vote, to their ability to obtain affordable healthcare, to their right to live in a clean environment, and to their right to be protected from rapism, bigotry, and misogyny.

**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?**

Combatting assaults on our democracy, including on voter rights and fair elections, is imperative. I have a long record, beginning with fighting for civil rights in the Deep South, for vigorously protecting the right to vote. In recent years, I helped to found a national non-profit organization that fights voter repression around the country. In Congress, I will author needed legislation and explore other avenues for fighting voter repression and unfair elections. I will press the President and the Administration to preserve these democratic imperatives.



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

The national crisis of weapon proliferation and gun violence in the country demands urgent action. Legislation may be very difficult to secure, so I will work within and around Congress to ban sales of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines and limit the prevalence of handguns in the US. I will try to persuade the President to use government purchasing power to ban assault weapon sales and limit handgun proliferation. A bill I introduced as Comptroller, later signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg, held gun manufacturers liable for negligence in selling assault rifles and other automatic or semiautomatic firearms and other weapons, and I will fight in Congress to allow this approach. With the

country's ever-expanding firearms market, introducing and strengthening laws holding manufacturers and sellers liable and accountable have proven effective, for instance, in the case of Sandy Hook. I have stood up to the gun lobby before and I will stand up to it now to achieve these reforms.

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

My parents were immigrants and refugees, and I know the important contributions immigrants and refugees make to our country. As Chair of the House Immigration Subcommittee, I wrote with Senator Ted Kennedy the Refugee Act of 1980, the country's only comprehensive refugee law. I was responsible for and worked hard to ensure the admission of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese boat people into the United States. More recently, as member of the Advisory Committee to the US Department of Homeland Security, I opposed private immigrant prisons, and when President

Trump imposed the policy of separating children from parents at the southwest border, I resigned from the Advisory Committee in protest. In Congress, I will fight for increased admission and protection of immigrants and refugees.

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

The criminal justice system must be effective in fighting crime but must also be fair, free from discrimination, and humane. My record as a strong leader in criminal justice attests to this deeply held belief. As Kings County District Attorney, I was the only DA in America to call for ending racial discrimination in jury selection using peremptory challenges, and my position was upheld by the Supreme Court. I was proud that the Court took note of the work of my office. When in Congress and as District Attorney, I also fought to reshape the criminal justice system so that it treated victims of domestic violence and rape with dignity and fairness. I created innovative programs and legislation. I authored the federal Rape Privacy Act, for example, and through litigation I ended the exemption for marital rape in New York State. I also created the first District Attorney unit in New York City to deal with misuse of force by police officers, and the first District Attorney unit in the State for the prosecution of environmental crimes. I will work for reforms that reduce crime and ensure fairness.

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

I care deeply about ensuring employees have the right to unionize, are free from discrimination, and enjoy safe work conditions. I have a robust record in this respect. As District Attorney, I brought a landmark case to prosecute mercury poisoning of an employee. I fought sexual harassment and was honored by the EEOC for my work in strengthening protections under Title IX. I will strongly advocate, legislatively and otherwise, to remove barriers that diminish or block access to unions. I will push hard to strengthen OSHA and the EEOC so that they can effectively protect the fundamental rights of employees to be free from discrimination and have fair and safe conditions in their workplace.



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

For too long, the federal government has starved needed housing programs. I have a long record of working on affordable housing. As Comptroller, for instance, I created ways to use the City's pension funds to finance the building of tens of thousands of units of affordable housing for City residents, and I will explore opportunities to expand that groundbreaking program. In Congress, I wrote legislation stopping insurance companies from their egregious practice of redlining sections of the City and other areas of the country, effectively blocking the growth of affordable housing. In Congress, I will build on this record of innovation to expand affordable housing and public housing.

**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.**

The NRA and big oil and gas.