



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?

I'm seeking the endorsement of CBID because if we are going to fight back against the corporations and billionaires who rigged our economy and trashed our climate, we need to do so through broad coalitions that bring together all of the voices of our district.

This primary will be won or lost entirely on the strength of local field operations, and while I will put my infrastructure up proudly against anyone else in this race, I also recognize that I need partners in Brooklyn who can help amplify our campaign's message while offering me experienced, local counsel as advisors to my campaign and to me personally. I will need your voices and your boots on the ground, but as any of the organizations I've worked with in the past can tell you, I want to gain as much from your strategic insights and policy knowledge as I do from your field operation – and together, we can build the kind of partnership that changes our community for the better.

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

My top legislative priority is taking back our economy, which sounds like an impossibly huge priority until you break it down into actionable pieces. Taking back our economy means pushing for and passing Joe Biden's Build Back Better agenda to direct more social infrastructure spending to our district, which includes fully funding our public housing capitol needs. It means passing the Green New Deal to direct federal funds to protect our frontline climate communities in Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn and shore up the defenses of our small businesses, while creating strong union jobs in the process.

And it means doing in Congress what I did in Albany: winning our community a larger share of government support for true affordable housing to ensure the people who live and work in our communities can keep their heads above water. If we can work together as a coalition, I believe we *can* make an economy that works for regular New Yorkers, and I would like CBID to be a part of this necessary effort.

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 am an unwavering defender of abortion rights and the broader umbrella of reproductive freedom rights now under direct attack by Republicans in Washington and in states across the country. I led the charge in Albany to strengthen our abortion protections during the last legislative session, and have been a staunch believer that New York must be a beacon for those who seek to exercise their fundamental right to obtain an abortion. In addition, I also supported legislation that would require New York to refuse cooperation with any efforts from red states to extradite, prosecute or penalize a woman for traveling to New York to receive 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?



Yes, we must codify Roe V Wade into our federal law. As you know. It is a fight. The senate decision was disappointing, and until we can vote to get codification passed, we also must provide funding to states that have codified and protected our rights because there will be places that refuse to allow life saving healthcare services. Not only am I committed to fighting for the funding to protect abortion in states where it is under threat, I would offer a resolution before the House urging President Biden to immediately lease vacant federal office space to abortion providers in states where abortion is under assault by Republican legislatures. I would also call on the Department of Health and Human Services to make out-of-state travel to obtain an abortion a coverable expense under Medicare, ensuring that those who are most at risk of losing access to abortion rights have a means to exercise their medical choice without facing crushing financial costs.

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 will not drill our way to climate justice and climate sustainability, but we can easily frack and drill our way into a catastrophe if we continue with the fatal path. As a lawmaker representing Lower Manhattan, the climate crisis is not theoretical to me. I've walked through the flood waters and seen businesses destroyed by the cost of repairs. I have spent my career taking action, and I look forward to being a voice for climate change activism in Congress.

I have been so closely connected to the fight for a Green New Deal in New York that supporters have taken to calling the package the Green Niou Deal. And I believe not only in supporting the Green New Deal in Congress, but I would introduce standalone legislation to direct federal investment dollars to New York's green tech and clean tech industries – and the good-paying, union jobs they bring. Just as our city is a financial capital, it could also be a green tech innovation capital, setting our communities up for economic prosperity that also strengthens our climate.

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

During my time in Albany I have been a vocal proponent for a single-payer health care system. A single-payer system gets us closest to healthcare justice: not just for patients, who would receive a better quality of care without the crushing debt; but also for healthcare service workers who are less likely to be exploited and worked to dangerous exhaustion by a for-profit system. I have also supported extending healthcare benefits to our undocumented children, and believe that a good quality of medical care is a fundamental human right that we as Democrats must be willing to stand and fight for.

One thing we don't talk about enough is the need not just for structural reform of the healthcare industry, but for a rethinking of how we practice medicine. I have been a fighter in Albany for culturally-appropriate care, and for the basic standard that we are entitled to healthcare professionals who speak our language, understand our culture, and can best provide care. Improving language access and cultural empathy training within the healthcare industry *will* lower costs and improve outcomes alongside other, larger structural reforms.

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



Yes, the filibuster is an unconscionable relic of the Senate's racist past. What's worse, the filibuster has become Republicans' tool of choice for making the argument that our government doesn't work. But government *can* work. Repealing the filibuster requires immense political courage, but Democrats were sent to Washington to enact a bold policy agenda – not to attempt bipartisanship with a Republican Party that is lockstep opposed to proposals their own voters support. I will use my voice in the press and among my colleagues to make this point – I believe if we build a strong enough coalition, we can remind the Senate that they are there to serve the people, not the same obstructionist interests that have prevented real progress for years.

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?.

In Albany, I fought and won protections that made it easier to exercise your right to vote. For example, in our last week, we just passed the John Lewis voting rights act. I will continue to fight for the expansion of voting rights in all of its forms, from opposing federal voter ID standards proposed by the far-right to working within my local community to ensure lawyers were available for anyone who faced challenges at a polling place. I believe deeply in the work Stacey Abrams has done in Georgia to bring to light the many different ways Republicans have stacked the act of voting against marginalized communities, and believe her playbook should be standard operating procedure for DNC voter protection efforts across the nation.

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

This year has been filled with senseless mass shootings and murders: in churches, in grocery stores, in elementary school classrooms. We do not end this epidemic of gun violence until we push back against the mountain of gun-industry money that is preventing Congress from passing real, consensus legislation to crack down on gun crime. That means banning AR-15 platform weapons and sharply restricting the sale of body armor, as I voted to do in Albany at the end of our most recent legislative session. It means eliminating 3D-printed "ghost" guns that make it almost impossible to trace weapons later used in crimes. And it means, on a macro level, passing legislation to end the flow of dark money from organizations like the NRA, to once and for all remove their corrupting influence from our politics.

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

We have almost had immigration deals so many times in our recent past, only to have them scuttled by special interests and extremist Republicans who vilify migrants and drive inaction in Congress. My parents immigrated here with me, and I know the challenges they faced as legal immigrants. The struggle among our undocumented neighbors is even more acute, and I have always been a proud and vocal supporter of both immigration reform and, more importantly, immigration justice.

Our undocumented immigrant community deserves a pathway to citizenship, yet these young children who came here through no choice of their own are now being punished by a Republican Party that would rather use them as political props than help them succeed in the country they know as home. I will defend our undocumented community and work to expand DACA protections and pass the DREAM Act.



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

I have long fought publicly to close the humanitarian crisis that is the Rikers Island jail, and I firmly believe that other states have provided New York with an actionable roadmap to break our current, endless cycle of mass incarceration. I was and am proud to have been a leader in passing our state's landmark bail reform law, and when the time came to defend that law I did not hide and refuse comment until the storm had passed.

I stood with our community activists and local allies to correct the record on bail reform and fight back against right-wing smears. Some, including several people currently seeking to represent this district in Congress, chose not to attend those marches or meet with those local leaders. They felt the issue was too politically *risky*. But I am here to serve my constituents, and you will always know that I am ready to fight for a more just and fair criminal justice system for all. That's the kind of fighter we need if we ever hope to get something as challenging as criminal justice reform legislation passed through Congress.

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

Strong unions build a strong middle class, and I've been honored to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with union workers my entire career. One of the biggest and most immediate impacts I can have as your next member of Congress is to ensure that federal funding for jobs programs and infrastructure projects promotes union labor, good pay, and safe working conditions. I will make the commitment to fight for those core principles in every case. We are in the middle of a national labor organizing renaissance, largely driven by young people who believe in the possibility of a better relationship between labor and management. Democrats must be on the front lines of this movement, marching on the picket lines and reminding Americans that since the beginning, we have stood unapologetically with working Americans against the ultra-rich and corrupt.

It's also beyond time to raise the federal minimum wage. And with the Supreme Court already weakening the administrative state, Congress must quickly act when it comes to passing clear legislation empowering agencies like OSHA to legally do their jobs. Without those safeguards, Supreme Court rulings due very soon could upend the ability of our government to effectively secure workplaces and ensure safe conditions.

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

We must fully fund our public housing, the only truly affordable housing that we have. Our federal government has divested from our public housing for decades when we should have been funding it and growing it. We should be making sure that we are preserving our public housing and building more public housing and making sure that our public housing is a shining beacon and not a point of shame. We should also be making sure that we have large scale dollars put into new affordable housing. We could be making sure to make housing under The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) Program be even more accessible. We could expand our DRIE and SCRIE programs.

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.

I do not accept any corporate, defense industry, or police union money.

