



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Jacqui Painter

Office Sought: District Leader

Email Address: jacqui.painter@gmail.com

Phone Number: 646-483-1367

Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability:

1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?

As a progressive democrat and reformer I admire the work they CBID has done for years to support progressives in our communities. Our joint campaign with my running mate incumbent male District Leader Julio Peña III is challenging the entrenched and corrupt leadership of the Brooklyn Democratic Party and we are creating a progressive coalition to achieve that. CBID's support would be very helpful in our fight to win this election and work hand in hand to reform the party so that it is inclusive, transparent, and truly fights for all democrats.

2) Will you vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn to be Chair of the Kings County Democratic Party? Please explain your answer.

I would not vote for Rodneyse. Under her leadership, the Brooklyn Democratic Party has become even more untransparent, undemocratic, and hostile to different voices. The leadership fails to fight for any meaningful Democratic Party objective and missed the opportunity to mobilize the 1.3 million democrats in the borough. More recently they committed an egregious staff appointment of a registered Republican and Trump supporter to Director.

3) What do you think are the most important responsibilities of a district leader?

One of the most important roles of a District Leader is to be the community's link to the democratic process and party. To be someone that engages the community in the voting process with transparency on things like information on County Committee, ballot initiatives, and poll working. Not just electing judges and assigning poll workers, but also educating your constituents about the process and role as well.

Another very important task of our District Leaders is to elect the Executive Committee Chair. Most recently we saw an example of just how important this is with the derogatory remarks made to District Leader Maritza Davila by other members during an executive session where the party Chair was trying to further stifle democratic participation. This is an example of failed leadership, and a disgrace to the "unity" that the Chair frequently references.

The District Leader should work with other elected officials on neighborhood initiatives and issues, and help keep both constituents and community leaders informed.

4) What changes would you like to see in the operation of the county organization and its rules? What would you like to stay the same?



I strongly believe we need to fix our broken electoral system to ensure no one is denied their right to vote. Our county party needs a platform in order to be a real voice for working people in the borough and should enact an agenda that fights injustice and holds its electeds accountable to. Growing up in a community where voter suppression is rampant, ensuring that everyone can participate in Democracy is what drives a lot of my activism already.

My running mate Julio Peña III has done a fantastic job in advocating and fighting to reform the rules that govern the democratic party. I will steadfastly work alongside Julio in that platform issue to ensure that the party is transparent and truly democratic. This includes reducing the amount of proxy votes and re-imagining that system.

5) What, if any, groups or organizations will you not accept campaign contributions from?

I will not ever accept campaign contributions from any Police Unions, Corporate PACs, or Real estate entities.

6) Do you support an active Assembly District Committee (ADC) in your Assembly District? Would you support an ADC that operates independently from AD leadership (Assembly member and/or District Leaders)?

In Assembly District 51 we are lucky to have a very active ADC, of which I am very supportive of. As a county committee member I have been very involved in the past few years, and in 2021 I was elected to Vice Chair for the Committee on County Organization for our ADC 51. ADC's are a great way to engage local county committee members in issues within the party and the community. Our ADC has registered thousands of voters within our Assembly district, and constantly keeps our community informed. I fully support active County Committee members, if an independent ADC means more engagement in Democracy, it would still be beneficial to our local party.

As District Leader I'm looking forward to getting our most marginalized neighbors involved in our ADC so that the party can be reflective of what our district actually looks like. As well as making sure information is distributed throughout our district in all languages spoken, and getting our ADC even more organized.

7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?

The current proxy process is not transparent nor democratic. This results in the county leadership picking their candidates and not giving a fair chance to other democratic candidates. I am fully supportive of eliminating or greatly reducing proxy voting for the nomination and have several mandatory public forums that are properly advertised so that county committee members and community members know who is running.

8) Do you support a party platform for the Brooklyn Democratic Party? If so, what two or three principal goals should be included in that platform?



The Brooklyn Democratic Party is one of the biggest in the country with 1.2 million registered democrats. Our county party has an untapped potential to be the leader of progress and social justice in the entire country. It is unbelievable that a party organization of this magnitude would have no party platform and not stand for anything. This has to change. One of the reasons that actually led me to run for District Leader is when the ballot propositions expanding voting rights failed to pass this year. This is something I organized with local clubs like NKD, LID, and BYD in years past. Not only would these reforms transformed voting rights in the entire state, but especially been integral in expanding our democracy in underserved neighborhoods like mine. It is truly the fault of the Brooklyn Democratic Party for not campaigning for them. Brooklyn Democrats should be fighters for voting rights in Brooklyn just as much as they are for Georgia.

Another issue would be housing. As a borough home to one of the highest numbers of tenants, housing is consistently one of the biggest issues our fellow Brooklynites face. AD 51 is home to a large number of Section 8 housing, and Brooklyn's largest NYCHA, the Red Hook Houses. I firmly believe housing is a human right and the party should mobilize to ensure families don't get evicted from their homes and seniors thrown to the streets for the profit of the greedy real estate industry.

The Democratic Party has a huge opportunity right now to fight for immigrant rights with the passing of Intro 1867, a bill for non-citizen immigrants to vote in municipal elections and register as members of political parties. This was a huge victory for both voting rights and immigrant rights, bringing around 800,000 new eligible voters. The Brooklyn Democratic party must work to register and engage these new voters to ensure this hard earned right is exercised and a new immigrant electorate is fully represented in our elections. This should be the first step for the party to continue to fight for immigrant issues that matter to voters.

9) How do you engage in your community now? How do you foresee engaging in your community as District Leader?

Growing up in Red Hook I have a strong connection to the community and am a very involved organizer and community leader here in South Brooklyn. Over the past several years I have developed close relationships with community leaders and stakeholders as we worked together to improve the conditions of the neighborhood, especially in matters of climate and housing justice.

My previous 5 years of work at the NYCHA Red Hook Senior Center allowed me to understand and respond to the pandemic in March of 2020, prompting me to start Red Hook Relief, the mutual aid organization for the neighborhood. Red Hook Relief has been able to partner with existing community based organizations in its work, like the Red Hook Initiative, Red Hook Justice Center, Red Hook Art Project, Pioneerworks, New York Immigrant Coalition, and the RETI Center.

The pandemic highlighted the vast inequality and suffering of my community, and was ultimately what finally pushed me to run for City Council for June 2021. Our campaign's staff, volunteers, language access, and issues were the most reflective of the community.

With South Brooklyn constantly overlooked by our city government, I've witnessed the power of community organizing all my life. Currently I work as a contracted community liaison for the local non-profit Pioneerworks, and run Red Hook Relief. Red Hook Relief has become the staple in our community for anyone who has issues or questions about various social services and issues that affect our neighborhood. I created a local phone/text network that updates the community to resources, local events, and news that



goes out to over 1,000 residents. I am constantly organizing and attending events and meetings. Most recently, I was able to lead an organizing effort to save our Recreation Center from closing with a testimonial campaign that over 100 community members engaged in.

I am also a member of Sunset Park Assembly; the Industry City No-Rezoning Coalition where I helped organize rallies, press conferences, and community testimonies. I'm also a founding member of Sunset Park ICE Watch, where we respond to threats to immigrant families in the community and provide much needed relief, action, and support.

I volunteer with the Chinese-American Planning Council, Visión Futuro, Red Hook Farms, and the Sunset Park Academy of Medical & Public Health Services, Inc (AMPHS). Since June of 2020, I have served on the County Committee, and as a NYC Parks Tree Steward for South Brooklyn. In 2021 I was elected to Vice Chair for the Committee on County Organization for our ADC 51. I was also part of the organizing to establish the Task Force on Gender Discrimination & Representation.

I also serve as Vice President of Communications with Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn, and am a long-time member of South Brooklyn DSA, Brooklyn Young Democrats, Stonewall Democratic Club, and New Kings Democrats.

I plan to use all of these roles to further engage my community on a daily basis.

10) What is your position on the current land use and zoning struggles in your district?

The ULURP process and land use process as it currently stands has greatly affected my district. Our communities in AD51 are suffering from the effects of rapid gentrification, disaster capitalism, and over development in a zoning process that is not transparent and does not center the voice of the communities. As of right zoning is deeply problematic in our district as we grapple with the last mile trucking facilities that will bring thousands of polluting trucks into our streets. These Amazon and UPS facilities were built without any community input and will have long lasting impacts to thousands of lives. I firmly believe we need a community centered approach to land use and zoning process.

11) District Leaders and the Kings County Democratic Committee Executive Committee have the power to recommend commissioners and other staff hires to the Board of Elections. In what ways would you use your position as District Leader to increase transparency in the commissioner selection and hiring processes for the BOE, and professionalization of the BOE generally? What, if anything, would you do differently than your predecessor to ensure fairness and transparency in the hiring of poll workers?

For too long the current process for choosing BOE commissioners, staff, and poll workers has been based on patronage and that has to end. I would use my position as district leader to create a transparent hiring and interview process based on merit and diversity. Our election process is the most important part of our democracy and we need to secure and protect it. We can't have corruption or incompetence in the Board of Elections, and the reforms I will implement will create greater transparency and fairness in the election process.

