

Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2020 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 feel that I understand and love the people of this district. I have spent my time on the ground with the people here, in the streets talking to those who are forgotten by traditional politicians, online encouraging my neighbors to take their grievances to their elected officials, and being a daily example of light and leadership in the community.

Martin Luther King Jr said "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love."

Our current representation has been focused on staying in power and putting traditional economic gains of corporations over the love and passion for the people. I think power is important, but without love at the forefront we are doing a disservice to this district that will have to be undone by generations to come. I'm the only candidate to stand on a platform of love and have a track record to back that up. Im energized and so is my base, we are excited to bring new fresh ideas and ideology to this district instead of the same old song that has been here and hasn't gotten us far at all.

In the next 10 years technology and automation will redefine our workforce and every fabric of our economy and community. We need elected officials that not only understand how to use and regulate this tech but also have the vision to create innovative solutions to the problems of the future. As a web developer and digital strategist I can help insure that we are able to best take advantage of the new technology and make sure that it serves the people and not the corporations and big banks

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

My top legislative priority is UBI, or Universal Basic Income. Right now in our current version of capitalism, over half of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, millions are in debt, and struggling to pay their bills. These financial burdens have negative emotional effects on the American Family. We need to give the American people something big, something that restores their faith in Congress and the government. Something that will have an effect on most people's lives and would help to transform the distribution of wealth and act as a spur of growth to the middle class. That's why we are fighting for Universal Basic Income in the form of \$1000/month for every American 18 and over.

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.

Yes, I support a woman's right to choose and I understand that there are so many factors that go into the

massive step of becoming a parent and choosing to terminate a pregnancy, which is why I support government sponsored counseling for parents and single mothers/fathers as well as universal basic income. The cost of childcare and parenthood today is rapidly rising and it's already too expensive for the average young adult to bear. So with \$1000 a month for the mother and \$1000 a month for the father that's extra disposable income that allows them to better raise their child without the stress of the new bills they have, and allows them to know that their government cares about the American family.

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 would push for a federal amendment that guarantees the right to abortion no matter what state you are in. We deserve these services and we must allow our women and the next generation of potential mothers to shape our national policy on this so their voice is highly reflected in our democracy.

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?

I feel we have grown too dependent on oil and gas for our everyday lives and we must start investing heavily in alternative methods for energy. I feel as though we must follow through with all the other alternative methods for energy before building any new major oil and gas projects. The potential of solar energy is very bright (no pun intended) and among young people there's lots of interest in this technology.

Electric power is another method that has great potential and has had great success serving the masses so we need to find ways to make it more prevalent in our use of energy. Also nuclear energy has lots of upsides and can be very useful and powerful, the science on this is very exciting and I'm open to doing more research and working with the American people to make this a reality in our lives as well.

We also need to change the culture around consumption in our society. We are being wasteful with our resources and must teach the next generation to conserve energy moving towards renewable energy whenever possible. According to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, 17% of the US's energy usage in 2018 was renewable, largely consisting of solar, wind, and hydroponic energy. We need to greatly increase this percentage, and we will work with whoever we need to in order to establish the infrastructure we need to do just that. Two thirds of the countries carbon emissions are connected to oil and gas companies, as we must pressure them to switch their production to renewable sources as soon as possible by financially incentivizing it at the least.

We also need to look into new technologies, such as carbon capture, as well as nuclear energy, in order to root out carbon from our atmosphere. Finally, we need to establish decentralized energy sources, including various renewables, so that communities can be self-sufficient with their energy, and not have to rely on big oil and gas pipelines. I cannot promise you that I will get rid of fossil fuels overnight, as that will have its own set of negative consequences, but I can promise you that I will oppose the expansion of new oil and gas pipelines, and I will work hard to facilitate a fast transition to an energy economy reliant on decentralized renewable sources.

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

Yes Medicare for All or “Paperboy Care” is at the top of our legislative agenda. I believe that every American deserves access to healthcare and that we should make healthcare a human right. For too long insurance companies and pharmaceutical corporations have been focused on raising profits instead of raising the health of our nation. We live in a land where it’s more beneficial to get patents for medicine instead of spreading the cures to the people.

We don’t have a healthcare system, we have a “sickcare” system, where we wait till ppl are extremely ill and sick to treat them instead of focusing on holistic and preventative care to ensure health throughout old age. We spend \$700 Billion on a military budget that most Americans do not directly benefit from, while hundreds of thousands of people are going bankrupt from medical and college debt. That should not happen in this country. I do believe in having a right to an opt-out where you do not have to be on a public plan, but this opt-out is different from a public option, as you do not need to pay a special tax to buy in, as the ACA requires.

I believe that healthcare is a right, and everyone who wants to have healthcare should be covered by the government for no cost out of their wallet, period. These principles will be implemented once im elected and the people will come first.

7) The Census determines how critical resources and political power are distributed. NYS and NYC have historically been undercounted. What action can you take to ensure that New Yorkers, and in particular, members of immigrant communities, are counted? What outreach and educational activities do you have planned?

I will be active in informing the district about the census, and I will work with the city council, and local organizations in ensuring that people answer the census correctly and are fully represented. I will find creative ways to help do so, such as create music videos, host events, get local celebrities involved to help achieve this important mission. Representation is one of the core themes of my campaign, and I will make sure my constituents are not let down, either by the census itself or in gerrymandering efforts that take place after the census. Why is my district drawn together like no shape i have ever seen before? Why are the districts created in a way to ensure victory for those in power? I also support using technology to further the outreach and education surrounding the census.

8) Voter ID laws, poll taxes, and limitations on polling sites and early voting are all examples of voter suppression tactics. Do you support actions to combat voter disenfranchisement? If so, please describe.

Yes those are all tactics of voter disenfranchisement. But perhaps the largest tactic of disenfranchisement that isn’t often spoken about is how the political establishment operates in a distant manner so that people are often put to sleep by the political process. Many of my constituents aren’t interested in all the policies and politicians that impact their everyday life. This is one of the main reasons I’m running for office. The voter turnout among registered democrats in the congressional primaries in my district is about 6%. This is completely unacceptable.

Our aim is to inform the people through music, comedy, film, tech, apps, food and other unconventional means. We also have to find ways to put more “fun” issues on the ballot so that more people are encouraged to come out and vote. I have also been holding voter registration rallies at my rap concerts and comedy shows, we find that some people want to register to vote but they haven’t been informed how so we make it super easy for them.

I'm also encouraging all of my volunteers to run for office as well with a campaign I call "Run With Me" where we aim to have 500 people run for county committee, to help make it more accessible and spread awareness about the issues in the community.

I will also ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals have their right to vote restored as soon as they get out of prison, and that the prison population itself is greatly decreased. This will allow for greater voting representation, especially among minority communities who have been hit the hardest by voter suppression and unjust incarceration.

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

I support Americans' right to bear arms, but this does not mean that we cannot take any steps to make America a safer place. Universal background checks should be further implemented and strengthened at the federal level, and we should definitely keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals and domestic abusers. I also want to spread love and lift Americans out of poverty, and while I do not expect that to end all gun violence, uplifting Americans economically will go a long way in reducing gun violence and attacks by violent extremist groups. Finally, I want to improve and greatly increase access to mental healthcare, as the majority of gun-related deaths(62-64%) in America are suicides, not murder. This is a much-forgotten statistic, and as a Congressional representative, I will fight to ensure that people with mental health issues and/or suicidal desires are cared for and able to get the help they need.

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

I want to provide a more innovative and humane immigration platform so that there are more paths to citizenship for newcomers to this country. I also will push amendments to make sure all immigrants, with the exception of rightfully convicted criminals, are protected from deportation, regardless of the current status of their documentation. I will also push to Abolish ICE and create a more people and family focused immigration regulation agency.

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

We need to finally end the War on Drugs for good. Decriminalize all drugs, legalize weed, and free those who have been incarcerated for many years for nonviolent drug offenses such as marijuana use. The War on Drugs has harmed drug users and minority communities, especially black communities. It has not reduced drug use, but it has imprisoned black people at a disproportionate rate. The solution is to not treat drug abuse as a crime, but as a medical issue which one should seek help for not be jailed for. We need to provide reparations to the black community for what the criminal justice system has done, how it has ripped apart families and communities how it has created wealth and jobs on the back of black citizens and how the cash bail system has kept many in jail for petty crimes when that was never the intent of cash bail in the first place.

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

UBI will do a lot to strengthen unions, as it will give people a sufficient safety net that will increase their bargaining power. With extra cash, workers will have more of a say in negotiations with their employers,

as they will have greater power to take their time in looking for fairly compensated work with an extra \$1,000 a month. I will also fight to uphold and defend laws protecting unions, at all levels of government. I will also help spread the word to the next generation of the importance of unions and let them know the achievements they have given us like the weekend and higher wages.

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

I will fight against the influence of big real estate companies, and fight for more rent control on a federal level, in addition to the local/state laws. Such rent control measures could be but are not limited to- laws against price hikes of a certain percentage, laws against evicting tenants for arbitrary reasons, and improvements on rent control for long-time tenants. I also want to ensure that there is quality housing for the homeless people of New York, of which there are more of here than in any other city in the country. I would like to establish a program that guarantees housing for all, shelter is the most basic human right and we need to work together to make this happen.

I also want to stress that UBI will go a long way in helping the homeless find housing, as the \$1,000 a month will go a long way in lifting them out of life on the streets, and help them take advantage of the resources we have to find housing, whether public or private, as well as jobs.

We also need to protect housing for our seniors and make amendments that ensure that if you pay property taxes at a home for over 30 years you can't lose your home for failure to pay utilities or property taxes. Some seniors I talk to in the community are retired, too elderly or too sick to work, so they can't afford the rising taxes on their home or the utilities costs, then they lose their home because of failure to pay. If you are an elderly resident we should be doing everything in our power to ensure housing for you and your family, not looking for loopholes to take it away.

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 will not take money from Real estate corporations, Corporations implicit in the prison industrial complex as well as those corporations complicit in the military industrial complex. I also will not take money from healthcare insurance corporations as many of these have caused the imbalanced healthcare system we have today.

15) What measures would you support to improve educational opportunities for all students in New York City? Please include how you would address the continued drop in Reading and Math scores and efforts to desegregate NYC schools.

We need to bring education back to the local level, and make it about the students as opposed to the needs of the federal or state government. I am not overly concerned with standardized test scores, as they are not a good representation of whether or not students are actually learning in the classroom. I want to make sure our education system is modernized, and helping students both learn and succeed in life. If we focus our resources on these goals, we can set a new standard for what a good education system looks like, and make New York City the model for the rest of the country.

A lot of what I learned in school, I don't ever need in everyday life. Our students are very bright, and they know that what they are being taught won't help them in their everyday life. They see the struggles their

parents have and see they never use the things they are learning in school. I support putting much more funding in technological education, more students need to learn coding and computer software building skills as these are the necessities of the future.

I also support increasing pay for our teachers, ensuring that we attract the top educators and retain all the talented teachers we already have. We must put a curriculum that is fun and current in front of our students as they are growing up with smartphones and tablets because this will keep them more engaged and enthusiastic about learning.

I would also add more black history into the curriculum as the black population was here in New York before it was even a state or America was a country yet so many of the achievements, role models and movements are left out of the curriculum. This has to change.

“The commission shall develop and recommend curriculum that incorporates the achievements made by African Americans as part of New York’s education curriculum including the woman’s abolitionist movement, the Harlem Renaissance, the Buffalo antislavery movement, the suffrage of African American Long Islanders”

We can’t set up a system where so many are underachieving and blame the students, if so many are failing and falling behind we need to blame the system! It needs to be completely revamped and rethought. We still teach school now the same way we did in the 1950s, we need to move our schools into the future.

I also support the idea of giving scholarships to public school students, paying them a small stipend every month to attend school. We also have to end the school to prison pipeline. Too many of our students in the black and latino communities are being handed to the police and end up in the system instead of finding innovative solutions to keep them engaged and find out where their talents are best served; we must reverse this.