



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2022 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Douglas Schneider

Email Address: dougschneiderbk@gmail.com

Office Sought: District Leader, 44th AD

Phone Number: 917.991.0005

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

1) Why do you seek an endorsement from CBID?

CBID is one of Brooklyn's premiere reform, progressive Democratic political clubs and is among the most influential and activist political clubs, especially in the 44th AD. It has long been at the forefront of political and social change in Brooklyn, and across the State. In my four years as District Leader, CBID has been a great partner in my attempts to reform the Brooklyn Democratic Party and has tirelessly worked to get more and better Democrats elected.

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

This is hard to answer in a vacuum as so much could change between now and when that vote were to happen. For example, Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn could no longer be Chair or seek renomination; there is the question whether a large number of new reform-minded District Leaders might get elected and a viable alternative to Rodneyse emerges to support; but, it is also possible that an even worse candidate emerges to challenge her.

That said, I did not vote for Frank Seddio for Chair and, based on where we are today, if I were to predict what the state of the Brooklyn Democratic Party will look like when the next Leader vote were to take place, I can't imagine I would vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn.

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

I believe that a District Leader is supposed to register, mobilize and organize voters. They are supposed to identify and mentor candidates to build a strong Democratic bench. They are supposed to engage the grassroots and work with them to develop & communicate a winning Democratic message. They are supposed to stand up and fight for the interests of their neighbors and neighborhoods and they are supposed to be a voice for their community within the local Democratic Party.

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I believe that the rules of the Brooklyn Democratic Party reflect an outdated vision of what it means to be a local Democratic party, is horribly drafted, and, in the long-term, must be entirely rewritten.

In the short term, I believe, and have introduced amendments to the Party rules relating to proxy reform and ensuring meeting minutes are taken and distributed. In addition, we need reforms relating to how meetings are conducted and how Party rules are adopted and amended. I also believe it is essential that the Party re-envisions and reorganizes the subcommittees required by the Party rules.



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

I only accept money from individuals. I do not accept money from judges or judicial candidates.

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)?

I fully support an independent ADC and have worked with community leaders in the 44th AD to assist them in creating and maintaining the ADC in the 44th AD. To be most successful, the ADC needs to work in collaboration with the District Leaders and Assemblymember

7) What County Committee proxy reforms do you support?

I am proud to have authored and introduced a set of amendments to the Party rules. One of our amendments would change the rules to allow proxies to be submitted electronically; require proxies to be filed 24 hours before the next meeting; and require a list of submitted proxies to be emailed to County Committee Members no later than one hour before the meeting.

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?

I absolutely support the creation of a party platform. I believe it is one of the fundamental jobs of a County Democratic Party. We are the grassroots of the Democratic Party and should reflect the views of local Democrats. Our voice is essential if we are to be a successful "bottom up" Party.

In terms of principal goals, I think they need to be a product of conversations from Democrats from all over Brooklyn. We have to recognize that Democrats across Brooklyn have differing views on important issues and our platform must arise from a transparent and deliberative process.

The platform should include our values and vision on the issues important to Brooklyn residents such as education; transportation and street safety; housing and land use; social justice (i.e., women's rights; immigrant rights; criminal justice reform, etc.); making the City work for working families; environmental justice and climate change; and much much more.

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

I am very present in the District. I am actively involved with NKD, CBID, LID, SCBUP, GOBK By Day, and Brooklyn Resisters. I am a former Trustee of the Park Slope Civic Council, served on the District Committee for Brad Lander's participatory budgeting initiative, and am a lay leader at Congregation Beth Elohim, where I was the volunteer coordinator for the Shabbat morning kids program and currently sit on its school reopening task force. I continue to work on pedestrian safety issues with organizations like Transportation Alternatives and Families For Safe Streets, including my "ClearTheCurbs" initiative relating to snow removal in crosswalks. Before Covid hit, I volunteered with the CAMBA men's shelter.



The 44th Assembly District is very linguistically diverse. Outside of English, Spanish, and Chinese, there are thousands of constituents who speak Bangla, Yiddish, Russian, and Urdu. In 2020, I was one of the first elected officials to host a community forum with the Department of Education about the Mayor's original school reopening plan. When the DOE refused to provide interpreters for the event, I organized community members to provide simultaneous translation in Bangla, Urdu and Russian. I have also been fighting the Board of Elections to provide increased language access at the polls.

I attend community events in all parts of the District and have made a particular effort to attend community events in the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Hassidic communities in the 44th AD. With the lines of the 44th AD changing with the recent redistricting, I will make the same extra effort to introduce myself to my new constituents and hear their opinions on the issues important to them.

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

The biggest zoning/land use issue in the 44th AD is the push for more and larger luxury apartment buildings. These buildings are too often constructed without consideration of the character of our neighborhoods and their impact on schools, transit, and general infrastructure. Our focus should be on building more affordable housing and supporting policies that encourage the growth of small businesses over chain stores and self-storage units.

12) 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?

I believe the BOE must be a professional organization and there must be an end to patronage jobs. I believe hiring decisions must be made on the merits and not prior contributions to the District Leader or Democratic Party. I assist anyone interested in become a poll worker in navigating the BOE requirements and do not show any favoritism.