



## Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2024 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Douglas Schneider

**Office Sought:** District Leader

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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 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. 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, if she seeks renomination? Please explain your answer.**

I did not vote for Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn for Chair in the last election and can't imagine I would vote for her in the future.

As District Leaders, our most important job is to work to get Democrats elected. The Chair's conduct undermining Councilmember Justin Brannan in his bid for re-election is disqualifying. Full Stop.

**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I believe that the rules of the Brooklyn Democratic Party reflect an outdated vision of what it means to be a local Democratic party, is horribly drafted, and, in the long-term, must be entirely rewritten.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 terms of the operations of the county organization, we need to have formal rules about the use of party resources. The Chair can no longer be allowed to use party resources, such as social media and email lists, to put out statements appearing to be on behalf of the Party that were never approved by the Executive Committee. The Chair can no longer be allowed to represent that the Party has endorsed candidates when the Executive Committee has never taken a vote.



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-envision 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 44<sup>th</sup> AD to assist them in creating and operating the ADC in the 44<sup>th</sup> AD.

**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, including changing the rules to allow proxies to be submitted electronically; requiring proxies to be filed 24 hours before the next meeting; and requiring 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 believe the creation of a party platform is a fundamental job of the Kings County Democratic County Committee. 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: quality 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.

**9) 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 multiple political clubs and advocacy groups in the district. 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. 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.

The 44<sup>th</sup> 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.

My wife and I run a family foundation with her siblings erecting Holocaust memorials in Belarus.

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

The biggest zoning/land use issue in the 44<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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?**

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. The biggest challenge we face is with respect to early voting, where we have over 200 poll workers who want to work during early voting, but we typically are only assigned a maximum of 10 positions by the BOE.