

2020 Candidate Questionnaire Response

What is a district leader?

A District Leader is an unpaid and democratically-elected official who serves as a liaison between the Democratic party and its voters and the community. District Leaders are responsible for representing their communities and advocating for community needs before the party, as well as selecting judicial candidates. In Brooklyn, District Leaders are also State Committeeperson representing the district at the state Democratic Party.

Despite being a volunteer positions, District Leaders hold really important duties and responsibilities, including determining the slate of Democratic judicial candidates, selecting the Brooklyn Democratic Party Leader, as well as to hiring poll workers and election inspectors for the primary, special, and general elections.

I see the role of District Leaders as organizers and galvanizers in the community to educate and energize voters about local state and federal elections, voting rights, key legislation and important legislative or issue campaigns.

Do you support creating a non-binary option for district leaders (e.g., district leaders can either be male, female, or gender-non binary).

Absolutely, I support any formulation that ends the exclusion of non-binary and gender nonconforming people from County Committee. In fact, I am advocating for it proactively.

What is your vision for a more open and transparent county party organization?

We face critical times from our national politics to our home in Brooklyn. We need to build a movement that changes politics from the bottom up, not top-down. That change starts from the local level, from people like you and me determined to make the Brooklyn county party more democratic and transparent.

I will be listening to and working with community members to develop a platform that reflects the changes we need to improve our leadership in Brooklyn. My vision for the Brooklyn party is one that commits to a high level of ethical and moral responsibility guided by the values of transparency, inclusion, and accountability. As a District Leader, I would:

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- Increase community participation: community participation is one of the key elements of a functioning democracy. Every leader and elected official should be listening to and responding to the needs of the community. My priority will be working hand-in-hand with the people of the community to represent and advocate for their needs and concerns.
- Work to establish an Assembly District Committee (ADC): as required by the party's bylaws, ADCs can only be organized by the District Leaders and are meant to enable County Committee members to work alongside the District Leaders in a more consistent and formal way. Until recently, there had not been any new ADCs established in over fifty years. I will organize to establish this local political structure in place so that the district has a formal platform to advocate for issues, rules, and policies representing our communities.
- Increase inclusion, diversity, and representation in the County Committee: we need a robust grassroots movement to energize our communities and be able to effect positive change. The Brooklyn Democratic party must reflect the vast diversity of its communities, including women, people of color, LGBTQI+, immigrants and young people. Today, the party excludes the participation of nonbinary and gender-nonconforming individuals. I will advocate for ensuring these constituencies have access to the political process and will support a rule change to remove any barrier for marginalized communities to have access to our political system and represent their lived experiences.
- Improve the process to select judges in Brooklyn: judges play key roles in impacting people's lives, and yet today, hardly anyone understands how judges are picked in Brooklyn. That has to change. We need increased transparency and impartiality in this process so that we can select judges because of their qualifications and values, not their connections with politics. The selection process needs to be open and follow clear standards. County Committee members and people should have the opportunity to know who these judicial candidates are as well. As a staff member at a legal organization, I deeply understand the importance of judges on bringing on impartial justice and has seen the atrocities of Trump Administration's appointments to federal court. We cannot allow the same to happen in our backyards. As District Leader, I will develop reforms to make the judicial nomination process more transparent and democratic by educating, consulting and engaging County Committee members and the community about the candidates and vote based on that in-district feedback.
- Accountability and transparency in the County Committee: I will lend my voice and vote as District Leader to ensure the party reforms the way proxy systems operate handing away voice from community members. I will support financial reporting reforms that

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provide accountability and discloses party finances. The county also should reform the way it calls on its membership to ensure a democratic and sustainable process that guarantees the highest level of participation county committee members possible. That includes making meetings details and available, as well as recording votes.

Tell us how a district leader can best support the LGBTQ community? Please be specific.

District Leaders can play key roles in supporting the LGBTQ+ community. As a District Leader, I would:

- Listen to and advocate for LGBTQ+ community members in my district: I would work with LGBTQ+ organizations and community members to determine key district needs and the best methods to support our community, especially people of color and members of intersectional communities.
- Encourage and actively recruit diverse, LGBTQ+ candidates to run for County Committee and other offices, working to identify key leaders who can represent our communities, working alongside groups like Lambda Independent Democrats.
- Use and encourage others to use gender-inclusive language in our communications and increase representation.
- Advocate for County Committee to reactivate Legislative Committee to discuss legislation, and for developing a policy platform, that includes LGBT legislation.

Do you commit to using inclusive and gender-neutral language in press releases and other announcements (e.g., “the people of the...” instead of “the men and women of the...”)?

Yes, I will do and I always try to do using the most inclusive language not only in English but also in Spanish.