

1. For most New Yorkers, the most important thing that their council members do is provide constituent services. How would you run your office to serve your community needs? Please give specific examples.

Nothing is more important than addressing and serving the needs of one's constituents, and constituent services would be my top priority. This is a value I learned at the very beginning of my career, and it is what guided me in my work to help nearly 1,000 immigrant families get their greencards, gain asylum or become citizens (as a 22 year old, I essentially had to teach myself immigration law backwards and forwards, and battle with the Departments of Homeland Security and State every day, which I am proud to say I did so rather successfully). To this day, this is the work I am most proud of and the work that has had the most meaning for me over the course of my career.

The elected official I worked for at the time was renowned for operating one of the most comprehensive and responsive constituent services operations in the city, and I remember working well until 2 - 3 AM multiple times a week for months to truly get through the entire stack of cases that had piled up for our office as a result of the Bush Administration's massive failure to appropriately handle immigration cases. This was of particular import to me, given my own experience growing up as the child of immigrants in NYC.

This work ethic has guided my entire career in public service, which I have treated as a truly 24/7 job for 14 years, very often at great personal and health risks.

In addition, representation matters, and ensuring that my staff represents this district will be the first steps in ensuring that my constituents are truly served.

I am running in no small part to bring my lived experience of being a queer South Asian person to the Council, and I do not want any New Yorkers who have lived in the types of margins I have to feel as though a room - particularly one where decisions are being made - is simply not for them, as I have felt my entire career.

My staff will look like the 26th District. We have burgeoning queer, trans, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, and Tibetan; legacy Filipino, Latinx, Korean, and Chinese communities; and we have the largest public housing complex in the nation. The issues facing these communities will not be adequately addressed unless they are, quite literally, in the room.

Importantly, I believe it is not useful to simply hand a community member a phone number or a website as a soft referral. I think it is more effective and meaningful to form relationships and support the constituent in following up given the immense barriers to many government services (what is known as a hard referral). This also requires a district office to develop relationships with relevant service providers, whether community based or within government.

With respect to formulating stances on local and policy issues, I say from experience that the most effective governance comes from maintaining a very strong core set of beliefs, while at the same time keeping an eye trained to all that is required to ultimately achieve a shared community objective.

I firmly believe in educating oneself completely about an issue through consultation with all stakeholders - especially impacted communities - before immediately arriving at a decision (naturally, there will be times when a position or decision is more obvious, and in such instances, there such be no dithering). In general, I will adhere to a community-led and community-driven process of identifying priorities and devising solutions, and will also see it as my job to bridge the gap between the many constitutional, legal, or budgetary constraints that City agencies might face and the needs of my constituents and the district.

2. If you served as an elected official, what did you do to help your constituents during the Covid-19 pandemic? Please be specific.

N/A

3. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running for office?

5 years

4. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce?

Given that my campaign is built on transforming our economy to make it work for the working people of our city, the very first piece of legislation I would introduce would be my **Delivery Justice Now!** Bill, which I have already articulated as a cornerstone of my campaign. It is the only proposal of its type *anywhere in the nation* - one which leverages any municipality's business licensing law authority to rein in worker, consumer, and small business exploitation being perpetrated by billion-dollar, Big Tech apps.

This proposal is comprehensive, it's implementable, and has been built hand-in-hand with worker advocates, as well as based on my many years of experience writing worker-focused legislation in City government.

Delivery Justice Now! Proposal Summary

App-based delivery services have become a major source of injustice and indignity for 80,000 Black, Brown, Asian, and immigrant workers - *deliveristas* - in New York City. Their everyday business has come to rely on unfair and dangerous labor practices, purposely confusing fee structures, and privacy-threatening data usage. *Deliveristas*, restaurant owners, and consumers across the city agree: the time has come for delivery apps to stop putting profits over people.

Though the City of New York is preempted by various state and federal laws from directly regulating many aspects of labor, the Council has the authority to require businesses that

operate in NYC to obtain a license from the Department of Consumer & Worker Protection (DCWP), and the Council can leverage this authority to regulate business practices that can have adverse impacts on consumers and workers.

The Council and the recent Administration have worked together in recent years to regulate certain industries with problematic labor practices through the Council's business licensing authority. Key examples of this include the Car Wash Licensing Law and the updated Laundry Licensing Law. The City's Freelance Isn't Free Act is another example of the Council creatively exploiting the legal parameters within which it must operate to extend basic protections to vulnerable classes of workers.

Using these laws as models and at the same time pursuing the passage of Council Member Brad Lander's bill that would amend the definition of "employee" in the existing Earned Sick Time Act to include most gig workers, the **Delivery Justice Now! proposal** would require food app delivery companies (UberEats, Doordash/Caviar, Postmates, Relay, GrubHub/Seamless, etc.) to obtain a license from DCWP in order to operate in New York City.

In order to obtain and maintain a license, these companies would be required to comply with both common-sense fair and transparent business practices, as well as first-of-their-kind stipulations regulating exploitative practices concerning consumers, restaurants, and most importantly, *deliveristas*.

The **Delivery Justice Now! proposal** would require all app delivery companies to:

1. Provide full and fair payment for all work done:

- Establish industry-wide minimum rates of pay based on distance and time
- Guarantee an average \$15 / hour wage
- Establish a timely payment schedule
- Eliminate delivery minimums for payment
- Require payment for all work done, including for canceled orders

2. Provide complete transparency for all stakeholders:

- Require itemized disclosures to *deliveristas*, consumers, and restaurants about exactly how much everyone is being paid for every order - including the app companies.
- Cap all fees charged to restaurants for all services at the existing 15% per order total - no other fees for any purpose would be allowed.

3. Provide key worker protections

- Require app companies to establish recourse mechanisms to protect against arbitrary terminations.
- Require full, plain-language and multilingual transparency in the *deliveristas* contracts around rating systems, deactivations, suspensions.
- Offer live, telephonic assistance to *deliveristas* in the field with on-demand translation services.

- Allow any representative of a *deliverista*'s choosing (friend, family member, non-profit or worker organizer rep) to represent a *deliverista* in any conversations or dispute resolutions.

In addition, the DJN would be pursued alongside CM Lander's bill to provide paid sick leave to all gig workers and would amend the existing Health Department restaurant licensing law to require restaurants to allow bathroom access to deliveristas.

4. Establish a fund for compensation in cases of injury or death

- Require app companies to obtain bonds that would provide money for a fund to cover expenses or damages in the case of injury or death.

5. Provide or service all essential tools

- Require app companies to reimburse *deliveristas* for depreciation and ongoing bike and e-bike maintenance costs if they own their bikes or provide (and replace) all bikes and tools for deliveristas if they don't own them.

6. Comply with consumer and business data protections

- Ban the sale of consumer data to third parties.
- Ban the practice of "scraping" - adding food items to the app platforms without consent from restaurants.

7. Keep and produce all records

- Require app companies to maintain, and provide to the City upon demand, records of every single transaction and delivery, and itemized breakdown of who got paid how much and when.

The DJN would also:

8. Establish a "Delivery Advocacy Board"

- The Delivery Advocacy Board would be tasked with comprehensively studying the industry in an ongoing way, and would have the authority to advise the Council and DCWP on issues pertaining to workers, consumers, and restaurants, so that the City can track the need for updated laws and rules.

Enforcement:

- At the outset, all app delivery companies would be required to comply with all provisions in order to *obtain* the license. In order to *maintain* the license, all companies will have to demonstrate continued compliance.
- Enforcement would be primarily driven via complaints to DCWP from *deliveristas*, consumers, and restaurants, as well as DCWP's own authority to monitor and demand the production of records regarding all relevant business practices.
- Each instance of a violation would be accompanied by a fine. Multiple violations would result in a suspension (which DCWP can do on its own), with a more egregious collection of violations resulting in possible license revocation at OATH following an administrative hearing.

- If the City finds that there are multiple repeated violations (“pattern or practice”), the law would establish the right of the City’s Law Department to bring a case in court against the hiring party (in this case the licensed business) with large civil penalties attached (similar to what currently is provided for in the Freelance Isn’t Free Act).
- The City’s existing Freelance Isn’t Free Act re-affirms the rights of freelancers (gig workers, as *deliveristas* are) to seek damages in State court for certain breach of contract claims, and also awards complainants attorneys’ fees and double damages (i.e. the amount of money owed to the hired party) if they win.
- All provisions regarding *deliveristas* would be applicable to anyone regardless of immigration status.

Separately, through Amit S. Bagga’s proposed \$100M “Fair Economy Fund,” the City would:

9. Publicly fund delivery worker organizing and skills training

- As part of a larger, citywide effort, the City would fund worker organizing and skills training, that would not only allow workers to organize around problematic labor practices, but also would train workers on how to create their own worker cooperatives (where feasible) so that they can attempt to build and own their own businesses.

Separately, the City must also pursue: A minimum 450-mile network of protected bike lanes

10. Immediately expand the City's protected bike lanes to ensure that the 80,000 deliveristas who are plying the streets to eke out their living are as protected as possible in the pursuit of their work.

- An emphasis would need to be placed on expanding this network in The Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and on Staten Island.
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My other signature proposal is to create a Fair Economy Fund, which would be the City’s first-ever publicly-funded training, employment, and organizing program dedicated to achieving justice for those New Yorkers who have been historically excluded from the economy and who have disproportionately suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building on the Census Complete Count Fund model Amit pioneered and starting with dedicating just .1 percent of the City’s budget - \$85 million - in the first year and building from there, A NYC Fair Economy Fund would:

- **Publicly fund linguistically and culturally competent community organizers** to provide workplace rights trainings, directly connect un- and under-employed New Yorkers to skills

trainings, and organize around key local issues (climate change, transportation, participatory budgeting, civic engagement, local elections)

- **Publicly fund immigrant small business organizers at Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)** so that they can meaningfully help mom-and-pop, brick-and-mortar, immigrant-owned small businesses get access to loans, grants, and capital designed for them but that never reaches them because of massive government failures to communicate effectively;
- **Publicly fund artists, performers, and creators for specific projects or for employment** through existing arts & culture organizations, thereby helping to economically stabilize New Yorkers who are the very soul of the city and the heart of the economy;
- **Partner directly with labor unions and informal labor groups (such as those working with day laborers)** to train unemployed New Yorkers on new skills, such as those required to retrofit buildings, replace electrical and heating sources, and install renewable energy sources;
- **Work to provide direct financial transfers to undocumented families** who by law are largely ineligible for most federal and state assistance and to whom the City cannot provide City tax dollars as a result of a State prohibition; this would build on the model pioneered by the Open Society Foundation in 2020.

In addition (and using separate resources), the City must immediately eliminate the remaining \$75 million in medallion debt that the City has hung like a noose around the necks of Black and immigrant taxi drivers as a result of its wantonly negligent regulation of the industry. This is a dark stain on the City's moral fabric, and must be dealt with on Day 1 of the next Administration and Council.

In order to truly build a Fair Economy for All, we'll need to put New Yorkers back to work in jobs with good wages and all the protections that workers deserve (including and especially the right to form a union).

The "New Jobs for New York" proposal would:

- Establish a City-led recruitment and training operation that directly connects the creators of new jobs with currently out-of-work New Yorkers to ensure that those BIPOC New Yorkers who have been hardest hit by COVID are among the first who have access to any new jobs that are being created.
- Establish a pipeline in local high schools, NYCHA, and higher education institutions, such as LaGuardia Community College in my district, of New Yorkers who can work on fighting climate change by retrofitting and upgrading our largest sources of emissions: our buildings. Jobs will need to be created that involve replacing boilers and windows; installing solar panels; upgrading electrical, water, and waste treatment systems, and more.

- Establish a much higher standard for the quality of job creation tied to any land use action requiring Council approval, in essence making good wages, training, ladders for growth, comprehensive protections, and “labor peace” prerequisites, not afterthoughts.

5. How would you describe the relationship between the City Council and the New York City Board of Elections? How will you use your power as a council member to improve the operations of the NYC BOE?

I would describe it as deeply problematic, toxic, opaque, and undemocratic.

As we know, historically, County party bosses have put forth their candidates and City Council members, especially those who might feel beholden to their county bosses, essentially serve as a rubber stamp to the nominated commissioners.

It is not necessary to go into great detail in this questionnaire regarding all of the problems plaguing the BOE, both structurally and substantively, but in terms of the City Council's role -- I think it is imperative, especially given the wildly negligent ways in which the BOE has operated in NYC, for City Council representatives to exercise a high degree of independence from County Party bosses and only vote for those commissioners that are deemed to be truly worthy of the very solemn role that a county commissioner is.

The Council should hold substantive “interview” hearings, as the Senate does, for example, with Presidential Cabinet nominees, and all nominees should be expected to possess relevant credentials and experience, particularly when it comes to management and overall institutional governance. The City Council can and should establish and articulate specific, substantive qualifications and decline to interview anyone who doesn't meet them. Given the Council's overall power, the Council can indeed invite Party officials to testify, and if they decline to, that itself is an indication of a lack of a commitment to transparency and accountability.

To date, the City Council at has essentially enabled the ongoing corruption, nepotism, and incompetence at the BOE.

If elected, I commit to turning this process into what it should be, even at the peril of attracting the wrath of County party bosses. The BOE in NYC has been notorious for vast election mismanagement, and ensuring that we have functional and truly transparent elections is a cornerstone of the democratic process.

6. Do you consider yourself a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? How will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works?

Yes, I am a staunch supporter of Ranked Choice Voting and will make sure that this system is upheld and will continue to educate the public on how it works. Our campaign

has already hosted several training sessions on Ranked Choice Voting in order to ensure that everyone understands the system and sees the value of it in the future of democratic elections. We are planning several more, including in other languages, before the end of the election.

In a time where electoral systems are being challenged, we must make sure that the systems put into place are equitable and our citizens are well informed. I am working towards this goal as a candidate and I will continue to do so if elected.

Having been a veteran of government for many years, one of the things I've seen firsthand is that despite its best intentions, government consistently fails at clear, consistent, and relevant communication with its people regarding critical issues - everything from elections, to participatory budgeting, to even how community or land use processes work, basic rights and protections, information about access to various types of business or individual assistance - the list is endless.

The census campaign I conceptualized and built was a first step in transforming the way government interacts with people -- by using public dollars to resource culturally and linguistically responsive organizing across the city, we were able to convey information about, and unlock participation in, the census, which was an exercise that in many ways was considered doomed to fail in NYC as a result of many, many factors.

Given NYC's relative success (see more below), we know that a co-governance model not only in terms of decision-making but specifically communication and engagement - the construction of a real, lasting civic infrastructure - is foundational to the future of an engaged, thriving, and inclusive city and democracy.

If elected, bridging the existing gaps (as proposed, for example, by my Fair Economy Fund), would be my top priority. If we truly expect to be a city where we all participate, then government must put the resources into and build the structures necessary in order for that to be the case.

- 7. The next City Council will appoint members to the city's redistricting commission and decide whether to approve or reject the commission's districting plans. In doing so, future council members will be responsible for shaping a fair political map for the coming decade. If elected, what would your approach be in proposing or voting to appoint commission members, and in considering proposed district maps?**

As the leader of the NYC Census campaign's \$40M complete count fund, we funded culturally and linguistically competent organizing efforts led by more than 160 community based organizations across the city—with more than 30% of them never having received government funding previously. What resulted: every majority Black neighborhood

outperformed 2010 numbers; Immigrant neighborhoods increased self response rate from 30-50 percentage points from the beginning to end of the Census count term.

Not only did this work yield the counts themselves, but the door to door enumerations which shed light on which had complete counts, near complete and undercounts. This information—along with clear, appropriate qualitative and quantitative data—must be taken into account when new districts are drawn. Making sure that a would-be commission member understands these complexities and trusting that they would run a fair and transparent process would help to drive my choices. Making sure that these data are accurately reflected in maps drawn would drive my review of maps drawn.

This issue is particularly important for my would-be district. Given the massive influx in population in District 26 since it was most recently drawn, it's more than likely that our district map will look immensely different after redistricting. It's essential that we make sure that the large immigrant communities and residents of public housing are not disparately impacted by zoning decisions and that their voices, rights, and needs are duly considered.

- 8. Now that New York City has implemented Ranked Choice Voting, do you support moving to an Open Primary system (eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system)? (yes/no)**

YES

- 9. Do you support making the appointment of the Police Commissioner subject to the advice and consent of the City Council? (yes/no)**

Yes

- 10. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the police department? How would you ensure penalties are imposed on police officers that commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing?**

Simply put - an independent entity that has the authority to dismiss officers based on gross misconduct / similar violations (as is the case with all other City employees via DOI).

A possible candidate is what would be the successor to the CCRB - an entity that has the ability to take complaints both from the public as well as from within NYPD based on internal investigations - and that would have binding authority to dismiss officers based on findings (changes to the Public Officers Law at the State level might be required in order to implement this).

Penalties should be established, via a combination of State and City laws (as relevant/needed), that define minimum (and severe) penalties for misconduct, with ranges for substantive severity and/or counts enabling the oversight body to apply increased penalties for given infractions, as needed. While the Police Commissioner should be kept as a part of the process, the application of penalties and final decisions regarding employment should rest with a panel that can accept non-binding recommendations from the Police Commissioner. The Commissioner should be stripped of their authority to be the final word (as is currently the case in most instances) on the application of penalties and/or whether or not an officer should remain employed.

Officers that are guilty of misconduct should be terminated from duty and taken off the city's payroll. The NYPD routinely keeps officers who have brutalized and even unjustly killed New Yorkers on payroll for years after incidents have occurred. There are currently 220 NYPD officers on modified duty, many of whom should be considered for termination. Instead, because the disciplinary system privileges police officers, they are able to continue to collect their taxpayer-funded salaries.

For some additional context, it is worth noting that thanks to decades of activism of New Yorkers who have experienced violence at the hands of law enforcement, and led by Communities United for Police Reform, we made historic victories at the State level with the passage of 3 laws. The repeal of 50-a, Police STAT Act, and a law allowing New York's Attorney General to investigate police misconduct, was a major victory. And, a few months ago, the AG exercised her newly enacted power to bring a lawsuit against the NYPD and bring an end to its pattern of repeatedly and blatantly violating the rights of New Yorkers. These reforms will make a big difference in improving oversight and accountability to the NYPD, but there's still a lot we can do right here in the city.

In addition, the Police Commissioner must be subject to approval from the Council. One of the reasons that the NYPD has been able to proverbially and in some cases literally get away with murder is that the Police Commissioner isn't more accountable to the Council. This isn't to say that the Council would become the Police Commissioner's boss, but having a Commissioner that knows that they must share critical information about their views, approaches, and policies under oath with the Council as a condition of employment will force the Mayor to have a very different decision-making process about who is considered an appropriate candidate for commissioner, and how that commissioner would approach policing.

Lastly, we must restructure civilian payouts by moving the burden from the taxpayer money to police department insurance policies. In just one year, from 2017 to 2018, New York taxpayers paid out \$230 million in about 6,500 misconduct cases. Just imagine if this money was used for education and workforce development. In health care, when mistakes happen, hospitals have malpractice insurance. In law enforcement, the taxpayer is on the hook. Even if the city covered the police department's malpractice premium, when its premium

goes up, the city would know which police officers are responsible--creating more transparency and greater incentive to terminate bad cops.

11. Do you support consolidating the three bodies that exercise oversight of the NYPD: the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), the Inspector General for the Police Department, the Mayor's Commission to Combat Police Corruption? (yes/no)

YES

12. Do you support giving the CCRB prompt and full access to footage from body-worn cameras, police officers' employment history and disciplinary records and all other document and materials in the possession of the NYPD relevant to its investigations? (yes/no)

Yes

13. Feel free to add any other policy proposals you support in regards to police accountability, misconduct, and oversight, or to effective policing including functions, training, and community relations.

We must divest from all that is broken with the NYPD, and invest in a peace state, not a police state. Public safety must not publicly terrorize. If elected, I would *immediately* work to **divest at least \$1 billion from the police, with a plan to move toward \$3 billion within a mayoral term** (the "Long Beach" lawsuit settlement would make it essentially impossible for the City to fire 50- 75% of the PD's workforce overnight; \$4 billion of the \$6 billion expense budget is salaries and overtime). We must also cut the capital budget by at least 50% in the first year, with a plan to increase that over time.

Including PD in the City's hiring freeze, reducing the force by 5% (which would generate \$204 million in savings), ending overtime (~\$150 million+), cutting invasive surveillance technology (the City spent \$31.4 million in 2020 on this), and more are all ways to implement this cut immediately. The Vice Squad that criminalizes largely LGBTQIA+ BIPOC and women must also be eliminated. As a note, I would have voted "no" on this fiscal year's budget, which clearly had no meaningful cuts to the NYPD.

The NYPD must also be removed from all mental health crisis response **and** from our schools. We need to reimagine policing entirely through the establishment of a first responder corps to respond to, defuse and neutralize non-violent crises, not escalate and further the criminalization of poverty and neurodivergency.

As the son of someone who has been a mental health professional exclusively serving immigrant New Yorkers for nearly 50 years, I'm particularly aware of the dangerous intersections

of mental health crises, race, policing, and economic marginalization. Unquestionably, the NYPD should be removed from all non-violent mental health crises, wellness checks, and so forth.

In terms of targets for these repurposed funds, in general, I would focus on the following areas:

- A new “First Responders Corps” 10,000 highly trained mental health, de-escalation, violence interruption, conflict mediation, social & legal services intervention professionals to replace police officers in responding to crisis situations. This is critical to ensuring that New Yorkers are supported, assisted, and empowered, and not criminalized or incarcerated;
- Fully-funded immigrant legal, health, literacy, civic engagement services;
- Fully-funded programs that stabilize BIPOC and immigrant CUNY students;
- Fully-funded workforce and job training programs for immigrants and POC trans folk;
- Targeted relief for BIPOC and immigrant-owned small businesses, creators/artists/performers, and local cultural venues;
- Increased healthcare facility and insurance access for the people of Western Queens.

With just *one day's worth* (~\$15 - \$16M) of the NYPD FY20 budget, we could pay for 2,300 high school students to attend CUNY for a year; provide more than 650 \$25,000 microloans to MWBEs and create a self-funding loan program; fund youth employment for 1,000 young New Yorkers for 20 hours a week at \$20/hour over 8 weeks; provide each of the estimated 75,000 DOE teachers with a \$200 supply stipend; invest \$500,000 in more than 30 restorative justice and harm reduction community based organizations; or open seven Safe Injection Sites (which I would advocate doing without the State's permission). And that's just with *one day's worth* of the NYPD FY20 budget.

Just some examples of additional targets for repurposed PD expense dollars include:

- Restoring the much-need \$20M CUNY ASAP program
- Fully funded after-school and Summer Youth Employment, thereby ending the annual political playball over these critical programs
- Significantly enhanced funding to critical civil law enforcement agencies protecting vulnerable consumers, workers, and members of the public: DCWP; CCHR (they have been chronically underfunded for years)

We must also assess the NYPD's **capital** budget, which is separate from expense, for all possible cuts, and repurpose these funds for other capital projects, such as the expansion of health care facilities in Western Queens, which suffers from a severe lack of access to safe birthing and preventative care options, as well as the building of new schools (Western Queens has seen more growth than any other neighborhood in the nation, and our educational infrastructure has not fully kept up). Long overdue and critical NYCHA capital needs must also be target for any repurposed PD capital dollars -- mold, lead remediation.

14. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker? (yes/no)

YES

15. Do you support reducing the overall number of committees so members can participate more meaningfully in fewer issues? (yes/no)

YES

16. Do you support making all actions designed to influence any City Council outcome, including the choice of speaker, reportable as a lobbying expense? (yes/no)

YES

17. The Council Speaker controls the allocation of a large share of the Council's overall discretionary spending, and in 2020 it was reported that the Speaker used this power to "punish" council members who opposed the 2021 budget. How would you balance control and order in the council with reasonable dissent?

While the premise of this question suggests that it is truly designed for a possible Speaker to answer, I will lead with values and an approach to governance here.

No New Yorker should ever be denied access to programs, services, or any other benefit as the result of their Council Member's vote on a budget. Ultimately, those who suffer from this type of "punishment" approach are less so Council Members and more so their constituents. As such, this type of approach is unethical and unconscionable.

Exploring changes to the Council's own rules regarding the scope and degree of the Speaker's power in these decisions is an option in terms of addressing this abusive practice. Council Members also have the obligation and opportunity to call attention to this practice, one which is not widely known outside of political or deeply-engaged civic circles. If average New Yorkers were to truly understand just how much they are being harmed for how their CM might be voting (often in ways that reflect the sentiment of the district), then the political pressure on the Speaker would be vastly different. The lack of accountability for the Speaker here is another result of a broken civic education/infrastructure - one that we must invest as many resources - political, policy, and financial - as we can.

18. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in City Hall has been severely curtailed since the council and city government shifted to work remotely. How would you propose to improve community engagement and public

participation while using remote technology (in public hearings, meetings, etc.), particularly to ensure equity in participation?

- A previously slow citywide transition to digital government was set into overdrive by the pandemic, surfacing digital versions of the same racial, social, and economic inequalities which existed theretofore. Too many New Yorkers, especially BIPOC and immigrant New Yorkers, lack the regular, high speed internet access, devices and literacy necessary to connect to local government activities online. Investing in citywide efforts to expand the reach and affordability of wifi, access to devices and culturally and linguistically competent computer skills training will be essential to closing the digital government divide.

19. New York City has suffered an immeasurable loss from the pandemic and its effects and the city's economy, social life, and culture. What is your path to recovery from this crisis?

Fair Economy Fund

Please see my prior answer referencing the Fair Economy Fund as part of this answer.

100,000 Jobs

After 15 of some of the bleakest months this city has known, we are finally beginning to turn a corner. And as we turn this corner, we are doing so at a time when we are reckoning from city hall to the halls of congress; from our living rooms to the rooms of public discourse; from our sofas to our streets with big questions, questions like:

How do we achieve racial justice? Immigrant justice? Gender justice? How do we organize ourselves as a society so that nobody is facing the pain of discrimination and hatred and everybody has the opportunity to live up to their potential?

The only way to achieve the racial, immigrant, and gender justice that we need to achieve is by achieving economic justice for each and every single New Yorker.

We can achieve economic justice by creating jobs, jobs that create strong communities because they pay people fair wages, jobs that pay enough so that each and every single one of us can just have one job.

The challenges facing our district reveal immense opportunities to create 100,000 new jobs:

Up to 75,000 jobs:

1. **Fighting Climate Change by Retrofitting our Buildings:** In order to address the most urgent climate threats that are facing New York City, Queens, and this district, we need to put people back to work building renewable power plants, retrofitting our buildings and public housing to be more energy efficient, and building infrastructure to protect against rising sea levels.

Types of jobs created: Architects, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, auditors, accountants, administrators, policy analysts, designers, heating and cooling technicians, glaziers, electricians, bricklayers, Masons, general contractors, excavators, inspectors, and plumbers,

2. **Creating Open Space and Greening our Infrastructure:** District 26 is one of the most starved districts in the City in terms of open space, and we can change that by putting people to work building new parks, expanding our protected bike network, and opening up pedestrian spaces.

Types of jobs created: Not just standard construction jobs—drillers, engineers, millers—but also New Yorkers trained in forestry, urban design, architecture, and more.

15,000 jobs:

3. **(Finally) Bringing Publicly-Funded Healthcare to Western Queens:** Western Queens is a notorious healthcare desert. In order to ensure that no one has to travel more than 20 minutes in order to see a doctor or a nurse, we need to build new clinics, new treatment centers, and increase staffing levels at existing sites. All of this will require new jobs in healthcare and in construction. There is also no place to give birth in the district—building a birthing center with culturally responsive practices and staff would need dualas, midwives, nurses, and doctors.

Types of jobs created: Dualas, midwives, nurses, social workers, nutritionists, therapists, social workers, and the nearly two dozen different types of nursing professions there are.

10,000 jobs:

4. **Aggressively Expanding Career-Focused Education in DOE and CUNY:** In order to train all of these new workers, we need to invest in education, especially public education. That means fully funding CUNY, making sure that private colleges pay their fair share of taxes, start vocational and career-path training in highschools in partnership with unions, and get rid of all the red tape that prevents us from recruiting trained professionals to teach kids.

Types of jobs created: Teachers, professors, adjunct lecturers, guidance counselors, career counselors.

Expanding Publicly-Funded Healthcare

Healthcare is a human right. I believe that every New Yorker should have access to low-to-no-cost, effective, and equitable healthcare regardless of income, immigration status, or any other factor.

To ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of employment or immigration status or any other factor, truly have access to healthcare, we must first and foremost work to expand NYC Care to include coverage not just at H+H hospitals and clinics, but the many DOH facilities that mostly Black and Brown New Yorkers rely on to receive services. We must aggressively *market* NYC Care to all New Yorkers, as many residents are unaware of the coverage that can be provided through it (I just spoke with a freelancer without health insurance at a door yesterday who'd never heard of the program).

We must at the same time prioritize the expansion of our public healthcare system - particularly in District 26, which has no H+H facilities - so as to ensure we are actually creating the capacity that will be needed in order to allow for an expansion of NYC Care coverage. As it is, our public healthcare infrastructure is woefully inadequate, especially in Queens, where we have only 1.8 hospital beds per 1,000 residents (compared to nearly 8 / 1,000 in Manhattan). Queens has lost more than 20,000 hospital beds since 2008 and is the last out of the five boroughs in terms of bed access. Additionally, there is no safe place to give birth in this district or receive access to long-term, culturally-responsive preventative care. Expanding our network to offer these services will no doubt be expensive. There are savings already available through H+H's annual budget, which currently presumes \$300 - \$500 million in capital spending that hasn't actually been used in several years, and there are savings to be found in changing the way NYC calculates presumed interest on our debt service. To be safe, we've been calculating 6%, but in reality, the rate has been more like 3%, and by calculating the actual rate at the beginning of every fiscal year, we could free up approximately \$2 billion in City tax levy that's otherwise not used. Generating additional revenue at the City level also requires divesting from all that's broken about our criminal and carceral systems in NYC and investing in the services and care that our residents truly need.

At the end of the day, the City can only generate so much revenue, as we know.

We must also fight for billions in additional revenue at the State level, and if elected, I commit to pursuing this revenue not just in the year following the pandemic, but for years to come. We must also fight to claw back the approximately \$750 million annually that Cuomo has appropriated for Medicaid and for charter school leases - neither of which NYC is supposed to be on the hook for.

In terms of additional action at the State level - I am a firm believer in a single-payer system and support the goals of the New York Health Act (which will require a significant amount of new revenue that we currently don't have to begin to implement). We've seen single-payer work in countless countries and Canadian provinces, and it is high time that at the very least we here in

New York ensure universal care to all our residents, from the undocumented to the unemployed. Implementing single-payer healthcare outside of a system like NYC Care at the City level is not likely to be possible from a revenue or possibly even a legal perspective, which is why we must fight hard to get NYHA passed at the State level.

As we move towards this (this is likely to continue to be a protracted fight), we must quickly create a **truly** “public option,” or a single public healthcare coverage plan available to *all* New Yorkers who are not covered by an existing union contract or via employer-based care, with the idea that employers, unions, and the State government build towards a truly single-payer model. We know that value-based, primary care is the direction our system needs to move in to fix our broken health care delivery framework. Making sure everyone has coverage is an important and unavoidable step in doing that.

In terms of my own experience with healthcare policy, I served as a legislative aide for a former Member of Congress who was instrumental in creating the Affordable Care Act (to be clear - approached it from the left and was the prime sponsor of single-payer and public-option amendments). Our team was intrinsically involved in the crafting and ultimate passage of the law, which we readily admit fell far short of our own goals for it. That said, I’ve come to understand the healthcare system (and all of its many disparities and challenges) rather well as a result of this, and understand the need for major reform (and investments) at all levels of government.

Utilizing my bully pulpit as Council Member to advocate for single payer at the State level would be a top priority.

An (Actual) Housing Plan for All

Housing is a human right, and yet for too long, we've allowed developer greed instead of human need to dictate the housing that gets built in NYC. Though we cannot achieve the Homes Guarantee plan without investment from Congress (this is clearly enumerated in the HG plan itself), we must do what we can as a city to work towards its goals.

I plan to work directly with tenant organizers, housing activists, and those New Yorkers in greatest need to understand the full scope of the challenges, so that we can, together, begin to solve our housing crisis.

As an initial matter, I believe we must:

- Prioritize creating housing for those who are the most severely rent-burdened, living in dangerously overcrowded conditions, and in shelter;
- Ensure all housing built on public land is deeply and permanently affordable;

- When we must work with residential developers, work exclusively with non-profit entities (and hold them highly accountable);
- Expand Right to Counsel to ensure all New Yorkers have free representation in Housing Court;
- Repurpose portions of our \$2 billion shelter budget to create purpose-built supportive housing and meaningfully increase voucher amounts;
- Fight in Congress for the repeal of the Faircloth Amendment, which prevents the federal government from building new public housing; *and*
- Work to overhaul the rules that prevent the creation of dedicated affordable housing for artists and creators.

Much of the above can be accomplished via local legislation, and I plan to build coalitions with organizers and my fellow electeds to accomplish these changes.

We must also do away with AMI as our only measure (we can't completely - federally mandated) and implement a "NYC Housing Vulnerability Index." In conversations about affordable housing, we so very rarely talk about *people* living in shelter, dangerously overcrowded conditions, doubled up, or in basements, and instead focus on AMI, which is an incredibly blunt, impersonal, and frankly broken tool.

The central issue is that we're simply not creating enough housing for the people who need it most.

I propose replacing AMI with a new formula, the Housing Vulnerability Index, that is based on a survey / community-driven "census" of those living in dangerously overcrowded conditions, in shelter, and in currently-illegal basements and attics. These surveys **must** be done to the ZIP code level - no larger, and must clearly take into account a wide range of factors, not just median rents, but also: formal *and* informal income, health indicators, ages, cultural needs (the need for many immigrant families to live in multi-generational households, for example), language needs, and much else. Overall levels of immigration documentation in a ZIP code must also be a factor, as we know that being undocumented is a very significant contributor to economic insecurity (and of course the City must not collect any PII in this matter).

In addition, in determining housing vulnerability, the top 20% of earners in ZIP codes that have a mix of very high earners and very low earners must be removed from the calculation so that the index is not skewed in any way by those who are least likely (at this hyper-local level) to need assistance (this would be the case in certain LIC or downtown Manhattan ZIP codes, but less so in parts of central / eastern Brooklyn, for example).

By determining *who* in New York City is in greatest need of losing housing and who is in most need of appropriate housing with dignity, we personalize, humanize, and make far more relevant the entire housing process.

Separately, NYCHA's challenges in our district are extensive. While the City cannot cover NYCHA's \$40 billion capital needs, it can ensure that the approximately \$200 million that goes unused by NYCHA every year in its annual budgets is used to address the most pressing issues (mold, lead, lack of access to basic services). I plan to leverage my nearly 15 years of experience in government to hold the next Mayor accountable in terms of their pick for NYCHA Chair, who must remake an entrenched bureaucracy and bring tenant leaders into decision-making . Lastly, I do not support the privatization of NYCHA in any way.

20. What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency and oversight). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

Though my experience in government hasn't largely addressed these areas specifically, I am deeply familiar with how to push and pull every lever of government -- the administrative, the legislative, and the political -- to pass legislation, implement new mandates with speed and efficacy, and to build support among stakeholders and the public during that process.

I have a proven track record of making government work for working people, including and most especially immigrants, workers, and consumers.

In addition to having led NYC's groundbreaking \$40M census campaign, I have:

- written and implemented first-of-their-kind laws protecting fast food workers, freelancers, paid care workers, immigrants, and consumers in the workplace and marketplace (**Paid Sick Leave, Fair Workweek, Freelance Isn't Free, Used Car Sales Licensing, Car Wash Licensing, Fair Fares NYC, and more**)
- helped connect hundreds of thousands of NYC's immigrants to financial access and stability by **successfully negotiating with more than half a dozen federal agencies to have IDNYC approved for banking**
- steered the City through relentless attacks from the Trump Administration to our public health and welfare systems;

- directly assisted more than 1,000 immigrant families in reuniting with their loved ones, becoming green card holders or citizens, and even gaining asylum.

This has all been accomplished by working from both inside and outside; building trust with communities so that their needs can be truly represented and addressed from within government.

21. What are the top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected? Feel free to reference an answer above rather than restate it.

Please see the answer to #19.