
Eli Northrup

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Submitter

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Name

Eli Northrup

Office Sought (New York State)

Assembly

District Number

69

In which primary

Democratic

What party line/s are you running under?

Democratic

Age

39

Education

BA, Cornell; Master of Laws, Georgetown; NYU, JD, Law

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I have never run for office before. I am the Policy Director of the Criminal Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders, and am a founding member of the Communities Not Cages campaign and serve on the steering committee.

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Campaign Manager Name

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Have you completed the required campaign finance filings? Yes

Are you participating in the State Public Campaign Finance Program? Yes

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee? Yes

Signature



What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected?

First: Improving community safety will be one of the top goals as an assemblymember, not just because I am passionate about it, but because it's where my expertise can be best put to use. This means supporting bills like Treatment Not Jail to ensure that people don't end up chronically incarcerated when the underlying issue is that they need treatment assistance for mental health issues. This also includes ensuring police are accountable to the people, not just themselves, meaning I will advocate for policies that make policing more transparent and replace their involvement in situations, such as mental health crises, where they have no expertise.

Second: I will also dedicate my time in the Assembly to tackling New York's affordable housing crisis. I believe in a Housing First approach, and as a public defender, have seen how stable housing is directly linked to community safety. I will prioritize building additional housing that is truly affordable, while also providing tenant protections that help seniors and those at risk of eviction stay in their homes. Our state's incentive system must be completely transformed to hold private developers to account to build actually affordable housing that is responsive to community input and needs. I will support the Housing Access Voucher

Program to create a statewide Section 8 program, which I believe is needed to provide housing to those experiencing homelessness, relieve burdened renters, and encourage affordable housing construction. I also believe New York State needs to meaningfully invest in NYCHA housing stock to not only repair crumbling infrastructure but improve the quality of life for NYCHA residents. I support the creation of additional public or social housing by constructing and converting additional housing, and by exploring better utilization and development of publicly owned land.

Third: Lastly, I want to ensure that we have an economy that works for all New Yorkers regardless of income. A recent study shows that middle-class and working families are leaving New York City at an alarming rate as the city becomes more unaffordable for all but the ultra-wealthy. In addition to tackling housing affordability, I will work to support working families with childcare and family leave, expand unemployment coverage to all workers, raise the minimum wage and permanently adjust it to inflation, tackle high healthcare costs, and build wealth by supporting Women and Minority Owned Businesses. New York State is the wealthiest US state per capita and the most economically unequal in the US, and I believe in advancing legislation that has the wealthiest in our state pay their fair share to invest in programs that uplift, support, and invest in working people.

If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would want to introduce? If you are an incumbent, what legislation have you passed which you are most proud of?

I would introduce legislation to require low frequency sirens. NYC and my constituents experience high levels of noise pollution, disturbing sleep and causing stress. Low frequency sirens are just as effective, and are used in many other countries. This would improve the quality of life for my constituents and New Yorkers broadly.

In providing constituent services, what are the major needs of your district's constituents and how will you meet them?

I think, like many places throughout the state, housing is one of the most pressing needs in District 69. Additionally, my district's population is older. Besides advocating for legislation to increase housing stock, I will work to connect constituents to housing services, such as vouchers to help them stay in their homes, applying for SRIE, and ensuring that landlords in my district do not get away with illegal rent destabilization or warehousing of units. I will also work to connect them to legal services when needed, and advocate for them by contacting agencies directly from my office, writing letters of support, and more.

There are also two NYCHA complexes in my district – these constituents are especially in need of advocacy and support, as maintenance requests are so often ignored. I would seek to be a very visible and direct resource to my constituents in NYCHA housing, and pressure the agency to provide them with the services and repair they need.

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

I have spent a lot of my time advocating for policy solutions in Albany and here in New York City. On the good government and reform front, I worked to repeal 50-A, the law that shielded police misconduct and disciplinary records from the public. 50-A was used as a tool to avoid accountability for the worst excesses and cruelties of policing, and with its repeal we have gotten closer to being able to hold police accountable, though there is still a long way to go.

I've also worked with legislators to prevent police abuses. For example, I helped organize a letter signed by state elected officials, underscoring the importance of legal observers and medics at protests during the George Floyd protests to prevent their unlawful kettling and arrests. As a member of BxD's policy team, I have helped lead the charge on the passage of the How Many Stops Act, which requires that police be transparent about the number and type of stops they are making of New Yorkers. In order to get this bill passed and finally enacted, I met with legislators and helped organize rallies and press conferences. I am currently advocating for the Jury of Our Peers Act which would allow those convicted of crimes to serve on juries.

How long have you lived in the district in which you are running?

I have lived in the neighborhood for 8.5 years. The district lines have changed multiple times.

1. Do you support moving city

elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you vote in favor of legislation that enacts that change?

Yes

2. Do you support restarting the constitutional amendment process to enact same-day voter registration in New York?

Yes

3. Do you support improving voter participation in CUNY and SUNY colleges by requiring schools to develop and implement a student voter engagement action plan?

Yes

4. Do you support reducing the party-based hiring in boards of elections to the minimum currently required by the constitution?

Yes

5. Do you support implementing an open, competitive, merit-based hiring process for all election administration staff and certain functions at polls?

Yes

6. Do you support requiring election commissioners and top BOE staff undergo mandatory training developed by the State Board of Elections?

Yes

7. How would you use your power as a legislator to improve election administration in New York? Feel free to add any policy proposals you support in regards to reforming the BOE.

Election administration in New York is messier than it needs to be. The boards of election across the state all work by different standards, and are typically run part time by people with little to no training. Appointments to BOEs are often about political patronage rather than effective administration. Information is not always disseminated in the most expedient or effective manner.

As a legislator, I would work to ensure that all BOE administrative staff received standardized training, that hiring was done based on merit and dedication to election administration rather than political reward, and that NYSBOE provided guidance on general procedures that all county BOEs must follow. For example, each county BOE's website looks radically different and it can be difficult to find the same information on any one site. Likewise, after parole voting was signed into law, for many months, some BOE websites indicated that people on parole couldn't vote, while others correctly stated that those on parole could vote. Some linked to outdated versions of voter registration forms, some linked to the most recent version. These kinds of issues actively deprive people of the vote, and though it may be accidental, it is a result of poor administration and an emphasis on the appearance on bipartisanship rather than effective administration.

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.

8. Will you support fully funding new state public campaign finance program in the upcoming budget process?

Yes

9. Do you commit to opposing any attempt to undermine the State Public Campaign Finance Program by changing its rules to benefit large donors?

Yes

10. Do you support requiring campaigns to disclose a contributor's employer in campaign finance reports, as is done in NYC?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

11. Who do you think should draw new district maps every decade in New York? (e.g., the current Independent Redistricting Commission, the Legislature/LATFOR, a new body)

I think some kind of redistricting commission should be in charge of drawing maps. This will ensure fairness for New Yorkers. The fatal flaw of the current commission is its even number of commissioners, which all but ensures a deadlock in most instances as Republicans and Democrats vie for power. A better composition would be something like a 9 person body with three Democrats, three Republicans, and three members of neither party, or adding one unaffiliated member to the current commission to ensure that they can draw and vote on maps expediently.

12. Do you support changing the constitutional redistricting process to reduce the influence of legislators over map-making process, make the redistricting commission less partisan and more diverse, and eliminate the Legislature's veto power over final maps?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

13. Do you support establishing an independent ethics agency with commissioners not chosen by the elected officials they oversee, which would have oversight powers over the executive and the legislature (also replaces the Legislative Ethics Commission)?

Yes

14. Do you support requiring lobbyists to report their contributions and fundraising activity?

Yes

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on ethics issues.

15. Do you support giving the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board access to certain sealed and confidential records in matters involving potential police discipline?

Yes

16. Do you support transferring disciplinary hearings involving

Yes

police officers from the NYPD to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)?

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions.

17. Do you support maintaining the Commission on Judicial Nomination, which recommends candidates for the Court of Appeals to the Governor?

No

If needed, you may elaborate below on your positions on the previous questions. You may also provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to advance your positions on these issues.

I believe an independent commission for creating judicial shortlists is likely a good way to ensure diversity and quality on the bench. To that end, I definitely support the existence of something like the Commission on Judicial Nomination as opposed to solely leaving the process up to the Governor and legislature. However, as currently constructed, the Commission on Judicial Nomination is not as effective as it could be at promoting diversity and quality on the bench. It has traditionally been far too easy for the Governor to simply choose who their next nominee would be and tell the Commission to put that person on the shortlist so they could nominate them. This is because the governor can have outsized power on the Commission. By having four appointees and often being able to combine them with the Chief Judge's appointees and have a supermajority of votes on the Commission. This is particularly bad when noting that the legislature doesn't have the same kind of unified voice given each of the leaders only appoints one commissioner.

Additionally we must continue to ensure diversity within the Commission. The Commission already specifies that not every commissioner can be a lawyer, but we should be more specific regarding the experiences and backgrounds of the commissioners. For example, for lawyers on the commission, there should be representation of those who represent indigent clients either as public defenders or civil legal service providers. For non-attorneys, we should make sure some candidates represent spaces such as academia, frontline workers, members of labor unions, and other people who have intellectual expertise or better represent everyday New Yorkers.

Lastly, I think the criteria for selecting shortlist candidates must be transparent. They should also be easily understood by the general populace.

In short, I am not convinced the Commission's current structure is the best structure and do not support how it may be easily gameable. However, New York should be using some kind of independent commission for creating shortlists of qualified lawyers to sit on the Court of Appeals.

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race), and what is your plan to achieve that number?

Our win number is 10,000.

I plan to have a robust field operation, our ID Goal is 12,000. We have identified a persuasion universe of 22,000 high prime voters, and a turnout universe of 7,632 lower persuasion younger voters. We have also identified key EDs of high turnout, progressive support, and/or working and middle class, and racially diverse neighborhoods. We will leverage relational organizing to grow our volunteer base and contact voters. Our team (field director and field organizer, managing volunteers) will leverage door knocking, community canvassing, phone banking, and text banking to reach this universe of voters.

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals?

Goal: \$390,000. Have raised \$92,000, not including \$65,000 expected public funds.

How many individual donors do you have?

445

Please indicate any endorsements that your campaign has received, if

I have been endorsed by the NY Working Families Party, Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assemblymember Anna Kelles, Assemblymember Latrice Walker,

applicable (you can also share a link to a list of endorsements) and Assemblymember Amanda Septimo.

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I am a public defender, policy advocate, and a dedicated fighter for social and racial justice. While I am new to politics, fighting for people is what I have done for my entire career. My experience representing people in the criminal court system over the past decade has shaped my understanding of the deep-rooted inequities in our society and the urgent need for systemic change. As I began going to Albany to fight for systemic change, I saw many of the same inequities playing out in our political system. My decision to run for the New York State Assembly in the 69th District stems from the same thing that has driven me as a public defender: my commitment to work collaboratively for justice and transform our community for the better.

As Policy Director for the Criminal Defense Practice at The Bronx Defenders, I lead an interdisciplinary team of advocates advancing policies to bring fairness and dignity to our criminal legal system. I work in coalition with other organizations and impacted people to draft legislation, craft strategy, and advocate for change, regularly making the trek to Albany to meet with elected officials and hold them accountable. It has been a privilege to represent my clients in those spaces. Since 2018, I have played a central role in campaigns at the city and state levels to protect due process, guarantee transparency, ensure that people with criminal records can find jobs and stable housing, and reduce the population of Rikers Island. In 2022, after working on the campaign for marijuana justice in New York State, I helped launch the Bronx Cannabis Hub, a free resource to help New Yorkers impacted by the War on Drugs apply for retail cannabis licenses (I now serve as Director).

At the heart of my campaign are the core values of justice, equity, and community. Justice is not just a legal concept for me—it's a guiding principle that informs every aspect of my work as a lawyer and advocate and that will motivate my service as a legislator. From fighting for housing rights and supporting families to advocating for comprehensive healthcare and ensuring that seniors receive the support they need, my vision is to create a society where everyone, regardless of their background, feels safe, recognized, and supported.

Equity is another pillar of my campaign. I have witnessed the disparities in our legal and social systems firsthand and understand that true progress can only be achieved when we address these imbalances head-on. Whether it's reforming our criminal legal system, ensuring universal access to high-quality education and healthcare, or creating an economy that works for everyone, my goal is to level the playing field for all New Yorkers.

Finally, I am deeply committed to bringing people together in community. I believe that the best solutions come from real collaboration and engagement with the people most directly impacted by a policy. I am committed not only to representing my constituents but actively involving them in the decision-making process. I will be a leader who listens as much as I talk, and one who is accessible to the people that I represent.

I am driven by the belief that we can do better as a society. We can create a New York that is fairer, more just, and more inclusive. It's time for bold, progressive leadership that isn't afraid to challenge the status quo and stand up against powerful interests. I am running to be that leader, to be a true champion for the people of the 69th District.

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