

Robert Rodriguez

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Name	Robert Rodriguez
Office Sought (New York State)	Assembly
District Number	68
Email	richie@rjfpr.com
Party Affiliation(s)	Democrat
Age	44
Education	Attended P.S. 112, River East Elementary School, Isaac Newton Middle School, and Cardinal Hayes High School. He holds a B.A. in history and political science from Yale University, and received his M.B.A. from New York University.
Occupation/Employer	Member, New York State Assembly. Director, PFM Group (Public Financial Management). Provides financial advisory services to state and local governments, and transportation issuers in the northeast and midwest.
Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement	Chairman of Community Board 11; member of the Board of Directors of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone; Served on the boards of the Terrence Cardinal Cooke Community Advisory Board, Catholic Charities Community Services of New York and has served on the Board of SCANNY, a youth and family services organizations located in East Harlem and the South Bronx.
Campaign Manager Name	Richard Fife
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If elected, which legislative conference will you join (e.g., Republican, Democrat, other)?	Democrat
Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?	Yes
Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?	Yes
Signature	



1. Replace the Joint Commission on Public Ethics and the Legislative Ethics Commission with an effective and independent enforcement body (S594A/A1282A).

Support

2. Limit outside compensation earned by state legislators and statewide officials to 25% of their salaries and eliminate stipends.

Oppose

3. Do you support or oppose the following changes to the state's current registration and voting system?

a. No-excuse absentee voting (second passage of constitutional amendment)	Support
b. Election Day voter registration (second passage of constitutional amendment)	Support
c. Re-enfranchisement of people on parole automatically through legislation, without requiring a Certificate of Good Conduct or Relief	Support
d. Automatic voter registration, unless the potential voter opts out	Support
e. Mandating poll sites on college campuses	Support

4. Reform the special election process, utilizing a nonpartisan special election for state legislative seats and eliminate delays in filling vacancies.

Support

5. Reduce the vote threshold to become a registered party back to 50,000 votes and keep the gubernatorial election as the qualifying election, and reduce the petition requirement for independent candidates back to 15,000 signatures.

Support

6. Amend the state's public campaign financing system, approved in the 2021 budget, by

a. Drastically reduce campaign contribution limits	Support
b. Set even lower contribution limits for registered lobbyists and those who do business with the state	Support
c. Move the campaign finance	Support

matching program to be administered by an independent, nonpartisan body outside of the NY Board of Election

d. Simplify the matching system by making both in- and out-of-district donations eligible and by eliminating the three different tiers for matching

Support

7. Require full disclosure of grants and contracts issued by the state, including the budget lines from which the spending is made and reporting on the results of each grant or contract over a certain amount.

Support

8. Provide for effective online disclosure and itemization of spending from elected officials' lump sum appropriations, including reporting on potential conflicts of interest and how the funds are spent.

Support

9. Repeal Civil Rights Law, Sec. 50-a, which shields from public view the disciplinary records of police officers, correction officers, and firefighters.

Support

10. Restructure the state Board of Elections to abolish the strict two-party division of governance and operation and put in place professional, nonpartisan administration.

Support

11. Empower the attorney general to investigate and prosecute election law malfeasance and cases of public corruption.

Support

12. Make mayoral control of city schools permanent, with a governance system that provides for accountability, transparency, parent engagement, and democratic participation.

Support

13. Simplify and consolidate New York State's court system by passing the Chief Judge's proposed constitutional amendment to modernize the courts.

Oppose

14. Adopt technological solutions and provisions that will allow the New York State legislature to convene and vote remotely if needed.

Support

15. Provide public access to observe and participate in

Support

government proceedings, in meetings that would be public under the New York Open Meetings Law, via live and recorded video available on government websites.

16. Implement immediate programs to facilitate absentee voting for all New York voters as long as the widespread contagion risk of COVID-19 continues, under current state constitutional limitations. This includes electronic submission of absentee ballot applications without a wet signature and a public information campaign.

Support

17. What are your concerns regarding the use of emergency powers during this crisis, and how do you think NY government can maintain public accountability standards at this time?

We need more transparency and accountability, not less. While I appreciate the need to move fast in an emergency, excluding the people and their representatives from the process and less sunlight does not lead to good policy. We need more oversight of the process and independent monitors to insure the integrity of the process.

18. What are the biggest challenges in your district in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak?

The biggest challenge is that we can't afford to just return to the ways thing were before this health crisis, we need to deal with structural racism of our laws and society that results in these crises hit communities of color much harder than other communities. We need to fund our schools, provide housing, make health care accessible, and give our families and individuals the chance to succeed. We are a community with the most public housing in the state and high prevalence of health disparities including hypertension, diabetes and obesity. Unless we create decent public housing and better healthcare access we will remain particularly susceptible to pandemics. Additionally, being a low income community, food insecurity was particularly stark particularly among the senior community. With increase stress on the budget, money needs to go to vulnerable communities that need it most.

19. What are the appropriate roles of city, state, and federal governments in a crisis such as this?

Every level of government has to play a role. We need money from the Federal and State government, and it must be managed fairly and equitably by the city. Additionally, we remain the representatives best able to provide local access, resource management, and allocation throughout the neighborhood connecting government resources with both organizations and individuals throughout the district.

20. How will you help your future constituents, residents and businesses, access potential funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, or any other future government relief funds?

Already we've seen problems as big, connected companies received quick approvals and neighborhood businesses were left with nothing. We need real accountability on how the money is spent, and law enforcement should be aggressive about those that take money who don't deserve it. We have already begun working with the small business community to connect to CDFIs and community banks in phase II of the stimulus PPP program, after being left out of the first phase of stimulus PPP through large commercial banks. We have already begun to see an improvement of approvals. I will also continue to advocate for the money to go to communities that were hit hardest and had suffered even before this health crisis hit. My constituents don't have the luxury of leaving easily, and many are essential workers required to work to survive. We will continue to assist folks in receiving unemployment insurance, and navigating future stimulus opportunities.

Campaign Promise 1

Fight to help community residents fight to get the help they need not only to get through this health crisis but also to make community stronger.

Campaign Promise 2

Continuing my fight for funding for NYCHA so families can live with dignity.

Campaign Promise 3

Provide more accessible health care through passage of the NY Health Act that supports the hospitals (public and private), and nursing homes.

Campaign Promise 4

Ensure more equitable distribution and increased support of public education

Campaign Promise 5

Fight to make sure all residents, including elder residents, and all families are not pushed or priced out of their homes.

Please tell us how you have and would continue to conduct the political affairs of this office in an upright manner, and maintain the public trust.

I grew in this community and am honored that the people have put their trust in me. I have served with honesty and integrity, take this responsibility seriously, and pledge to continue to do so if the people send me back.