



2019-2020 District Leader Candidate Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires will be public documents available on our website, so put your best foot forward. If we ultimately hold an endorsement vote in your race, your questionnaire will be circulated to our membership before the vote.

Name	Samy Nemir Olivares
Public e-mail address for your campaign (if available)	samy@samy.nyc
How long have you lived in your district?	I have lived and worked in the district for three years.
What civic and political organizations are you involved with in your district?	I am a member of Community Board 4 in Bushwick and member of the Community Education Council D32, where I am the Chair of the After-school Committee. I also volunteer with the Wyckoff Ave. Merchants Association. I'm also a member of Lambda Independent Democrats (LID), New King Democrats (NKD) and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), North Brooklyn Branch.
What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?	<p>As a human rights activist, I have dedicated my career to advocate for gender, racial, social and economic justice and equality for over a decade. I feel fortunate to have been able to dedicate my professional career to fighting for human rights, including LGBT rights, women's rights, rights for people of color, immigrant communities and workers, while working under nonprofits and community organizing. I am glad that even before the Trump-Pence administration started undermining our democracy, I dedicated a year to resist his candidacy while working for the 2016 presidential campaign. After 2016, I have been fighting on the frontlines of resistance at the Center for Popular Democracy, working on campaigns to coordinate acts of civil disobedience in D.C., protesting the Trump Administration's attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, advocating against the repeal of the DACA program, fighting against GOP's tax bill by bird dogging, and helping Puerto Rico disaster relief efforts by amplifying the Hurricane Maria Fund and working with refugee families in FEMA hotels in Brooklyn.</p> <p>Additionally, I dedicated my Master's thesis/project to elevating the stories of one of the country's most vulnerable populations, the transgender community; particularly, trans women of color in their pursuit of civil rights protections under New York State law. Through that work, I helped advocate for the passage of GENDA (Gender Expression Non Discrimination Act), which was finally passed in Jan. 2019. I also co-founded the group Queeramisú- LGBT Leaders of Color for Progress, an initiative that highlights the need for more diverse, intersectional, and progressive voices in politics that reflect the issues impacting queer and communities of color. In my community, I'm most proud of the work I am doing as Chair of the After-school Committee in my local school council, where I am advocating and helping ensure public schools have access to extracurricular programming that help children thrive, while simultaneously helping families financially, and our local community.</p>

<p>Why do you want to serve as a District Leader?</p>	<p>I am running for District Leader for several reasons:</p> <p>First, to better make the party represent and engage the voices of our diverse communities, and to serve as a progressive voice that advocates for inclusion, diversity, and social justice.</p> <p>I believe that we need to transform and improve the way politics is run on the local level, and that includes the Brooklyn Democratic Party. We need to elect more leaders committed to community participation and that share a vision for Brooklyn, and the country, rooted in progressive values, inclusion, and social justice. In Bushwick and Williamsburg, we have one of the most progressive, Latinx, immigrant and queer districts in the city. Oftentimes, our leadership does not represent those values. I see the role of District Leader as a community organizer and convener, who is supposed to organize and energize the community around electoral work, but also civic engagement and policy issues. That's not happening right now at its maximum potential.</p> <p>I am running for District Leader because we can show how these positions can be and do so much more. We can prove that a new way of doing politics is possible, one that comes from the people and that engages a diverse range of voices in the process. Politics that brings back power to the people, not held in the hands of just a few behind the scenes. I'm running to help make the Democratic Party more transparent, progressive, and representative of the voters it represents, as well as, to inspire others to help build a movement that reflects these values.</p> <p>Finally, in the era of Trump where children are being held in cages, where immigrants have been deported or left to die, when women and LGBT communities are under constant attack, when our healthcare system is compromised, when the government sides with discrimination and rolls back on civil rights protections for vulnerable populations, we cannot remain silent. While I was outraged for a while, I decided to instead get elected. We need to step up and fight back. I can start locally in my community to defend my neighbors.</p> <p>That's what I hope I can do as District Leader.</p>
<p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?</p>	<p>New Kings Democrats is one of the most dynamic and respectable political clubs in the entire city. From organizing the community, to educating folks about the little-known politics of the Kings County Committee, to challenging the party leadership to improve its operations, to engaging thousands of Brooklynites into the political process from its most grassroots level, NKD has transformed local politics for a generation and an entire borough; setting the example of what progressive, accountable, and transparent democracy should look like. Receiving the club's endorsement, would represent getting support from a reform-based institution, founded in my district, and whose values reflect my candidacy. Additionally, being my campaign's main priority is field strategy, to listen and talk with constituents about their concerns, NKD's</p>

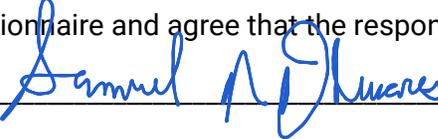
	<p>traditional support of boots on the ground would greatly support this goal. This could be a dynamic collaboration that would also energize people to register to vote, run for County Committee, and/or support other campaigns and civic engagement efforts.</p>
<p>What are your district's greatest strengths and struggles?</p>	<p>My district is one of the most dynamic, diverse and progressive districts in the country. Williamsburg and Bushwick represent community, a strong sense of solidarity and resiliency. Our greatest assets are the invaluable commitments of long-time and newcomer residents who feel a deep passion and love for the neighborhoods. After going through decades of displacement, disinvestment, fires, criminality, and abandonment, District 53 has been able to survive and grow stronger throughout the years; through strong community ties, volunteership, and philanthropy between elected officials, churches, police, and community-based organizations.</p> <p>However, District 53 faces great challenges including increasing and vertiginous gentrification and displacement, crisis of affordable housing compounded with schools that are losing children and with it funding. Our district also has one of the largest undocumented and non-English speaking populations, who are not counted on the Census and who face barriers in accessing resources, services, and enaging meaningfully within the community. More recently, the impending rezoning process has added pressure to an already critical condition, and now more than ever it's of paramount importance to work together for the future of Bushwick and Williamsburg.</p>
<p>What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?</p>	<p>In order to have extraordinary leadership in NYC, Albany and Washington, we need to have extraordinary leaders at the local level. Brooklyn's County Committee is the grassroots level of our political structure and should help shape the direction and future of our communities. I envision a party that is inclusive, democratic and transparent, one in which members of our communities are fully involved and represent the diverse voices that reflect Brooklyn's communities.</p> <p>I envision a party that is taking on and helping lead the way in progressive ideas and legislation pushing the boundary at the local, state, and national level, setting the example for the rest of the country. A party of innovative legislation and ideas to find real, concrete solutions to address issues facing our most marginalized communities; such as homelessness, access to housing, school-to-prison pipeline, lack of access to health care services and more. A party that is not afraid to take bold stands. We won't get there if voters don't know where meetings are held, who's running for what, where the party stands on issues, and when elections are.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you support the work of New Kings Democrats and its partners to make the Brooklyn Democratic</p>	<p>If elected, I would gladly work hand-in-hand with NKD to continue energizing, organizing, and mobilizing register voters and potential voters in engaging in civic engagement initiatives; like the Rep Your Block campaign and</p>

<p>Party more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?</p>	<p>encouraging people to run for County Committee. If elected, I would be an ally of NKD, helping champion and advocating through my voice and vote for policy and rule change proposals NKD put forward to make County Committee more accountable; from proxy reform, fiscal responsibility, judicial reform, membership engagement, and more democratic and transparent structures.</p> <p>As my usual way of working, I would join forces with NKD and other partners, collaboratively building and working in coalition helping find best practices and ideas to make the party function and be responsive to our needs. I will also reserve my vote for leadership that reflects these values of transparency, inclusion and accountability.</p> <p>In my District, I will establish, as a priority, the creation of an Assembly District Committee (ADC) - as required by the party's bylaws and meant to enable county committee members to work alongside the District Leaders in a more consistent and formal way. I will organize to establish this local political structure so that the district has a formal platform to advocate for procedural and policy issues, support rule changes, and work in committees to address more local issues.</p>
<p>Please review NKD's County Committee Reform Platform: https://bit.ly/2Zw4fpE Do you support these proposed reforms? Are there any that you do not support? If so, why?</p>	<p>Yes, all of them!</p>
<p>Do you believe the Party needs to change the way it nominates and elects judges? If so, please describe how you think this process could be improved.</p>	<p>Absolutely. Hardly anyone today understands how judges are selected in Brooklyn to fill some of the most important positions in people's lives. That has to change. We need more transparency and impartiality in this process so that we can select judges based on their qualifications and values, rather than their political connections. The selection process needs to be open and follow clear standards. County committee members and people should have the opportunity to know who these candidates are as well. Working for a legal organization, I deeply understand the importance of judges to impartial justice, and I have seen the atrocities of the Trump Administration's appointments to federal courts. We cannot allow the same to happen in our own backyards. As District Leader, I would develop a process 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.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you engage your constituents in local politics? Do you have a plan for reaching out to traditionally underrepresented communities in your district?</p>	<p>As a community activist, as a Puerto-Rican-Dominican and Latinx, native Spanish-speaker, migrant, and queer person, I am in directly represent and relate with multiple constituencies in my district. As District Leader, I would approach community outreach through a culturally-sensitive lens to understand the struggles and challenges of communicating with a predominantly Spanish-speaking, immigrant, and extremely low-income population facing multiple pressing issues or disengage with the political machine. I would maintain close relationships with community based organizations that serve these communities, reach out to them directly through</p>

	<p>canvassing and partnering with groups and leaders to host community events in innovative ways and places to reach out to them where they spend their time. The role of District Leader is a challenging one as it represents over 50,000 voters with no offices, resources, or staff, but District Leaders can still work closely with County Committee members that represent their neighborhoods to reach out and listen in a hyper-local way.</p> <p>I will also reach out and work with local groups that already engage with diverse demographics and that have been organizing in the community from public housing tenant's groups to activist groups, community based organizations to affinity groups.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you make sure that you have enough time to adequately serve as a district leader? How much time do you envision putting into this work every week?</p>	<p>As District Leader, I will strive to be responsive to my community's needs and dedicate adequate time necessary to organize, respond, and listen to my community members. As a role with various and flexible responsibilities, I will expect to dedicate time, mostly on the weekends, to communicate and reach out to the community. One of the key issues with leadership is lack of communication, so I will implement an open-door policy, create an email and/or website exclusively for District Leader business, and I will ensure I answer messages in a timely manner. I live and work as a volunteer in the neighborhood and have extensive conversations and meetings in the district, so I will be in close and constant communications with voters around 3 to 4 days a week.</p>
<p>What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds?</p>	<p>We will officially launch our campaign on Dec. 13, but we expect to have raised at least 5K before next filing cycle. However, this race will be won on the field.</p>
<p>What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?</p>	<p>This campaign will officially launch on December 13, but I have already received the support of multiple community leaders, and elected officials from the district like Councilmember Antonio Reynoso and Senator Julia Salazar. This is the first political club whose endorsement I have sought, and in the upcoming weeks, I will continue to gather more support.</p>
<p>What areas of the district do you see as your biggest sources of votes and support?</p>	<p>Every vote is important as it represents the voice of a Brooklynite, a human being. I expect to reach out and hopefully receive support from all geographical areas of the district, but there seems to be a historical trend of increased participation in Southside / Los Sures in Williamsburg as well as key parts of Bushwick.</p>
<p>Is there a District Leader in Brooklyn or elsewhere in NYC who you admire? If so, why?</p>	<p>I admire the work of former District Leader Daniel Dromm who for 16 years organized multiple communities in Jackson Heights, including seniors, teachers, workers; hosting multiple events in his district and organizing voters. More recently, while she didn't become a District Leader, I greatly admire Genesis Aquino, whose campaign put County Committee on the map; shedding light on the local party and the role of District Leader, explaining to people, in a simple way, why these positions are so important in order to transform our leadership and to get things done. I especially respect the way Aquino engaged our communities in the political process to eventually pass progressive legislation. All this, while also being a ferocious advocate for social justice issues in your community.</p>

What is one fun fact about you?	As an art lover, I decided one day to teach myself how to paint. I love to do colorful paintings that challenge the notion of what we think about gender and race. The walls of my room are covered with art made by -or depicting- women and queer people that I buy from vintage stores, local artists (or even I find in the street garbage!). P.S. <i>Women's artwork make up less than 3% of art bought in auctions and less than 10% in museums worldwide!</i>
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I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature: 

Date: 12/09/2019

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your signed and scanned questionnaire to politics@newkingsdemocrats.com