

2017 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

(District Attorney & Mayoral Candidate Questionnaires coming soon!)

1. Name

Rev. Khader El-Yateem

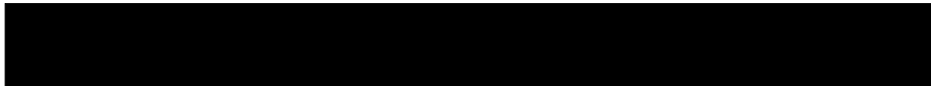
2. Council District number and neighborhoods represented:

CD43 - Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach

3. How long have you lived in the above district?

22 Years

4. Preferred campaign contact information: name, email address, phone number



5. Why do you want to serve as a member of the NYC Council?

I am running to be the megaphone for the unheard voices in my district - immigrants, people of color, people living in poverty, artists, and those struggling to afford rent in my neighborhood. When people think of my district, they think of million dollar homes and luxury cars - and if you looked at the legislative priorities of our elected officials, you would get the same sense. I am running to put the marginalized residents first. I am running to be a bold, progressive, and inclusive voice in City Council. I am the only candidate in this race who is not a career politician - I've never been on the payroll of an elected official, nor held elected office. I want a City Councilman who is accountable to the people, not to the political establishment.

6. What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?

I established the Unity Task Force, an organization that brought Muslims, Christians, and Jews together to combat harassment and hate crimes in our community. I also helped to establish the first drug rehabilitation center in my district, to help combat the opioid problem among youth in our community.

7. What are the greatest strengths and struggles of your council district?

This district is made up of many multi-generational families, mom and pop shops, and an active civic life. It is also made up of a growing and vibrant immigrant population, including the largest Arab community in the city. However, the community suffers from great racial and cultural divides, which goes unrecognized by our elected officials and results in tensions, violence, and occasionally hate crimes. Rising rent costs are closing down small businesses and evicting people from their homes, which is leading to a growing homelessness problem and heavy opioid use. We need to protect both long-term and newer residents to this district, while ensuring that our neighborhoods don't become unaffordable for those who already live and work here.

8. Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?

I know New Kings Democrats to be progressive, and interested in supporting immigrants and people of color who are running for office. I am the only candidate in this race who comes from outside the political establishment, and I think NKD understands the value of that.

9. If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?

Passing the Right to Know Act
Passing Municipal, Pre-Citizen Voting
Maintaining NYC as a Sanctuary City

In terms of budgetary priorities, my district is incredibly underfunded. I want to get more money for social service agencies, arts organizations, and after school programs in my district, and will be fighting to create a community center for our district as well.

10. What is one thing you would do while in office to make New York City government more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?

I have committed to holding quarterly town halls for residents in my district, with on-site interpretation for English language learners. I have committed to extending my office hours to include evenings and weekends in order to accommodate working families in my district. I will bring participatory budgeting to my district.

On a citywide level, I will also be fighting to move the Community Board from an appointment to election model, in order to ensure accountability towards elected officials. And finally, working to pass municipal, pre-citizen voting would be the greatest step we could take toward inclusivity and accessibility.

11. In what ways would you like to expand voting access, and how can you do this as a member of the NYC Council?

I will fight for voter reform, including same-day registration and early voting.

12. What criminal justice reforms would you like to see the Council implement?

Closing rikers: we need to see a plan, and ensure that this happens with expediency - not a ten year process. The Right to Know Act needs to be passed. We need to end broken windows policing, and we need to end unwarranted surveillance of Muslim communities once and for all.

13. Do you support the Right to Know Act?

Yes. This is common sense reform that, if passed, will prevent countless men of color from ending up in prison over minor infractions.

14. Will you be participating in the NYC Matching Funds program?

Yes. We are almost at the threshold needed to receive matching funds. I believe this program is a crucial part of keeping elections fair and balanced - first time candidates, especially those like myself who come from outside the political establishment, benefit enormously from this program.

15. NKD supports holding a New York State Constitutional Convention. Do you? Why or why not?

We do not support the Constitutional Convention. At this political moment, with the majority of the Senators being GOP, we feel that there could be serious consequences and losses of protections for poor and working class people, women, black people, and other people of color.

16. What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?

Our vision is a Brooklyn Democratic Party that is made up of directly affected folks - poor & working class, people of color, and immigrants, who are accountable to Brooklyn residents and not to the political status quo. We hope that the Brooklyn Democratic Party would fight to make voting more accessible and inclusive, and would fight for meaningful campaign finance reform for all local races.

17. What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds?

We announced our campaign on February 26th, and filed on March 11th. In that two weeks, we raised \$81,611, mostly from people of color, immigrants, and small business owners. I am not taking donations from PACs, corporations, or any other special interest groups.

18. What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?

I have been endorsed by Councilman Carlos Menchaca, Assemblywoman Pam Harris, Linda Sarsour, and the League of Independent Theater. I'm seeking endorsement from all of the major unions, the Democratic Socialists of America, the Working Families Party, the New York State Immigrant Action Fund, and the Muslim Democratic Club of New York.

19. Of the elected officials in the NYC Council, who do you admire most and why?

I most admire Councilman Carlos Menchaca. Councilman Menchaca is a true progressive who is truly accountable to his residents. He has remained accessible as an elected official, and is dedicated to supporting residents who organize and are civically engaged. He is unafraid to take unpopular, principled positions and leads with moral conviction.

20. What are some of the ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life?

Most of my leadership in the community was catalyzed by being on Community Board 10. I maintain that Community Boards are a good way to be involved, but they need to be more accessible and representative, which is why CBs should which to an elected model.

Since the election of Trump, there have been new grassroots groups popping up in my neighborhood, who are resisting Trump's agenda and fighting for social justice. These groups are putting pressure on our elected officials and pushing the progressive agenda forward, so that is another great way to be involved.

21. What is one fun fact about you?

I have a Yorkie named Pastor Max El-Yateem.