



NEW KINGS DEMOCRATS

2017 Senate District 26 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.

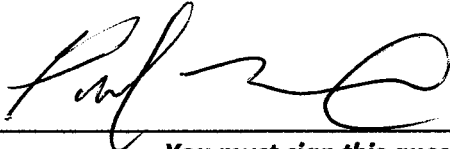
Name	Paul Newell
How long have you lived in the 26th Senate District?	I've lived in, or within a few blocks of, the 26th Senate District my whole life. I was born and raised in Lower Manhattan and am a proud product of our district's public schools. I currently live in Masaryk Towers, a Mitchell-Lama complex located in the heart of the Lower East Side.
Why do you want to serve as a member of the NYS Senate?	As an organizer, District Leader, and activist, I have worked my professional life for economic, social, racial, and gender justice in New York generally and the neighborhoods in the 26th SD. All of us engaged in this fight know that a broken Albany, and an undemocratic State Senate, is the key stumbling block to these goals in this progressive state. As Senator from this district, I will have the opportunity win real justice for tenants, workers, patients, criminal justice reform, and more. We also have an opportunity to achieve real ethics, campaign finance and electoral reform for New York. Doing so would be more of an honor than I could hope for in this life.
What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leading the successful 8-year campaign to extend rent-regulation to over 4,000 families in the 26th Senate District. ● Standing up to Sheldon Silver and Albany's culture of corruption when it was difficult and unpopular. ● Co-Founding the New York Neighbors for American Values, and successfully leading the fight for diversity and religious freedom when a national xenophobic movement tried to prevent to construction of an Islamic Cultural Center in our district.
What are the greatest strengths and struggles of Senate District 26?	<p>Injustice and inequality are our greatest struggles. Like most New Yorkers, SD 26 residents struggle with out of control rent, health care, and other costs that make it difficult to live and thrive here.</p> <p>Our greatest single strength, I believe, is our 150-year deeply rooted culture of community organizing. From the founding of the first settlement houses, to the birth of much of America's labor movement, these neighborhoods have been at the forefront of the fight for justice as long as it has been fought in this country. That culture has served us well as we face rampant displacement and gentrification.</p> <p>SD 26 also includes the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Lower East Side and the Brooklyn Navy Yards. This community has lifted our lamp beside the golden door for centuries of immigrants. Today, more than ever, America needs to hear our neighborhoods' values.</p>

<p>What are some of the issues specific to the Brooklyn portion of the district you would address?</p>	<p>I have been deeply engaged in Brooklyn’s reform and progressive movements for many years. Working with many members of NKD, IND, and CBID, I fought for responsible development at Atlantic Yards, Broadway Triangle, and at the Williamsburg waterfront, and assisted efforts to preserve LICH hospital in Cobble Hill. I’ve also campaigned alongside you for Brooklyn progressive heroes including Antonio Reynoso, Lincoln Restler, and our own Luchadora, Nydia Velazquez.</p> <p>Brooklynites and Manhattanites face many of the same issues of injustice and displacement. One key issue for the State of NY today that disproportionately affects Brooklyn is the lack of a stable funding source for the MTA. As a founding member of the Riders Alliance I have lobbied and advocated for better funding sources, and against the “sweeping” of MTA dedicated revenues to the general funds passed multiple times by the Assembly and Senate. I will continue to do so as Senator.</p> <p>In addition, I speak both Yiddish and Spanish - both of which will make me a better and more accessible State Senator for SD 26’s Brooklyn neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats’ endorsement?</p>	<p>I believe that, more than any other candidate in this race, I share NKD’s values and approach to politics. We share a bold progressive vision, and a commitment to hyper-local engagement in the Democratic Party process to achieve it.</p> <p>Much like “Rep Your Block” I have worked for eight years as a District Leader to bring more people into the process. This year alone, I trained over 50 first-time candidates to run for NY County Democratic Committee.</p> <p>NKD has also been an unbowed voice for many of the policies I hold dear. Most notably meaningful criminal justice reform and reforming our electoral system – but many others as well.</p> <p>Since NKD was founded, I have considered us to be carrying out the same political project across the river. Carrying NKD’s endorsement would be an honor I wear with great pride.</p>
<p>If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extending rent regulation and returning that authority to the City of New York. 2. Medicare for All in NYS. 3. Far-reaching campaign finance and electoral reform.
<p>Do you pledge to caucus only with the Democrats? What are your thoughts on the IDC?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>I have signed the “No IDC NY” pledge. More than that, I have worked to elect a real Democratic Senate for years. I’ve led buses of volunteers to campaign for Democratic Senate candidates through NY State, and for Democratic primary challengers to IDC candidates.</p>
<p>Do you pledge not to support any members of the IDC financially or with endorsements?</p>	<p>Yes. Indeed, earlier this year, I sponsored the controversial, but ultimately successful, resolution to forbid the NY County Democratic Party from expending any resources on behalf of members of the IDC. I will continue to oppose them as vigorously as I can.</p>

<p>How do you think the Democratic parties of Manhattan and Brooklyn should choose their nominee in this election?</p>	<p>I believe both boroughs must have a say in the selection of a nominee for the special election, and that the process for doing so must be transparent and fair. The best way to do this is through a joint and open meeting of both borough's county committees. Every member of the County Committee should be invited to participate under a uniform set of rules. Further, every effort should be made to have as many Election Districts as possible represented.</p> <p>Although the County Committee method for choosing nominees in special elections would not be my first choice were I designing the system from scratch, it is the system we have, and we owe it to the people of the 26th Senate District to make it as democratic as possible.</p>
<p>In what ways would you like to expand voting access?</p>	<p>I firmly support early voting, easier and faster registration and party change, and no-excuse vote-by-mail/absentee ballots available to all voters and integrated into initial vote counts. Additionally, as District Leader, I have a close-up view of our Board of Elections. Even before any of the above laws are enacted, we can expand voting access by professionalizing and unionizing the BOE, and bringing it into the civil service system.</p>
<p>What criminal justice reforms would you like to see the Senate enact?</p>	<p>Frustration with Albany's failure to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws is what first drove me to run for public office. While we've improved some on that particular front, we have a long way to go.</p> <p>A few top priorities in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I would immediately co-sponsor Kalief's Law, Senator Squadron's "speedy trial" bill that has been pending in the State Senate for quite some time. ● Stop treating nonviolent drug offenses as a strictly criminal issue, and deal with them as the public health matter that they are; I would seek to enact legislation to codify that distinction. ● The state should follow New York City in enacting legislation to "ban the box" in all situations, to prevent former offenders from being discriminated against during their reentry into society. I would eagerly co-sponsor laws such as Senator Montgomery's Fair Access to Education Act, which would "ban the box" in college admissions. ● Prison reform, including full support for the Close Rikers campaign, and the move away from mass incarceration it requires.
<p>NKD supports holding a New York State Constitutional Convention. Do you? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>While I recognize the concerns of our sisters and brothers in the Labor movement that important protections could be lost, I do not believe that is a serious threat in one of the most progressive states in America.</p> <p>Much more of a threat is the culture of corruption that has dominated our state government for generations. When three men (and thus far it has always been men) sit in a secret room and write laws for 20 million New Yorkers, it is the lobbyists who win, and tenants, students, workers, women, patients, people of color, and our environment that lose. At a convention, we can implement non-partisan redistricting, a ban on outside income for legislators, state funding of elections, and return NY's</p>

	<p>government to the people it is intended to represent.</p> <p>A convention presents a once-in-a-generation to build a new system, and allow New York State to take its rightful place as the national leader on progressive policy and governance that we so desperately need right now.</p>
<p>What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?</p>	<p>I have been endorsed by the Downtown Independent Democrats, the Lower East Side Democratic Club, District Leaders Vittoria Fariello, Terri Cude, Alice Cancel, and Pedro Cardi, and over 100 members of the Democratic County Committee. I've also been endorsed by many tenant and community leaders throughout this district.</p> <p>I am honored to have earned all of these endorsements, and look forward to announcing more endorsements from local activists and reformers over the course of this campaign.</p>
<p>Of the elected officials in the NYS Senate, who do you admire most and why?</p>	<p>Two: Liz Krueger has been fighting for progressive and democratic government for New York for almost two decades now. I greatly admire her commitment to what she believes in, and the fact that she has never stopped advocating for the New Yorkers most in need of Albany's attention.</p> <p>Gustavo Rivera is an inspirational leader whose resounding defeat of the corrupt Pedro Espada sent shockwaves through Albany. Since his election, Sen. Rivera has fully taken up the reform cause, and led the fight for Medicare for All in the NYS Senate.</p>
<p>What is one fun fact about you?</p>	<p>I have two cats, named Lillian Wald and Loisaida Paez-Newell.</p>

I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature:  Date: 9/9/2017

You must sign this questionnaire!