



2018 State Senate 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	
State Senate District number and neighborhoods represented	22 nd District. Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, Gravesend, Sheepshead Bay, Borough Park, Midwood, Manhattan Beach, Gerritsen Beach, Marine Park
Preferred campaign contact information: name, email address, phone number	[REDACTED]
How long have you lived in the above district?	25 years
What civic and political organizations are you involved with in the district?	I am currently a member of the United Progressive Democratic Club, Bay Ridge Democrats, and Bay Democrats
What are the greatest strengths and struggles of your Senate district?	We have relatively strong public schools, great dining options, incredible diversity, and beautiful waterfront vistas. There's a lot of talent down in Southern Brooklyn! But our transportation system is failing. Subways and buses are unreliable. Marine Park is a transit desert. Bay Ridge is increasingly unaffordable for the working class. Our schools are very overcrowded. Many neighborhoods are in flood zones and vulnerable to future storm surges. The property tax system doesn't serve the area well.
Why do you want to serve as a member of the State Senate?	I want to bring an independent, progressive voice to Albany. I am an outsider who knows the system inside and out from my work in journalism. The incumbent, Marty Golden, is a Donald Trump-supporting Republican. I want to pass the NY Health Act, hold the MTA accountable for its failure and fix our transit, and strengthen rent laws. I want to clean up corruption by overhauling our awful voting laws and campaign finance system. I'm unafraid to stand up to the mediocre Democrats (as well as right-wing Republicans) holding us back. I will certainly stand up to the Brooklyn Democratic Party and join the fight to try to install a new county leader.
What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?	I am proud of my journalism career. I won an award from the NY Press Club for my Village Voice commentary. I'm proud of my ability to hold politicians and bad actors accountable through my journalism and advocacy. I'm used to driving change from the outside. Now I will do it from the inside.
What do you consider to be the highlights of your work experience?	I am particularly proud of the work I did exposing corruption in the Queens Democratic Party when I was a reporter, writing for both the Voice and the Daily News. I wrote a widely-read story on the nepotism and self-dealing going on in Surrogate's Court. I also exposed lawyers for the Queens Democratic Party who represented banks foreclosing on people's homes.
Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?	I respect NKD as a serious reform voice in a city lacking in one. I long admired your fight against Vito Lopez and the growth you've enjoyed as a club. We need a strong reform movement. I consider myself one of you. We need to bring real democracy to Brooklyn. We aren't there yet.
If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?	My priorities will be to strengthen tenant laws in 2019, pass the NY Health Act, and hold the MTA accountable for its terrible spending practices. We need to get to the bottom of why it costs so much for simple capital projects and why we spend far more than any other transit agency in the world; why transit cash is always raised for other things; and why we won't spend money on upgrading a 100-year-old signaling network. I also want new, sustainable revenue for

	transit.
If elected, how will you support the work of New Kings Democrats and its partners to make New York City government more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?	I am a supporter of the public financing of elections and the voter reforms being pushed by outnumbered Senate Democrats in Albany. Locally, I will be an ally in your fight to bring transparency to the Brooklyn Democratic Party. I am particularly interested in judicial reform—getting politics out of the criminal justice system as much as possible. Frank Seddio doesn't believe in real democracy. I do.
What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?	My vision is a democratic, diverse party that actually encourages progressive policy, recruits good candidates, and takes the politics out of the criminal justice system. The Brooklyn Democratic Party needs to actually care about defeating conservatives like Marty Golden and not enabling them.
How will you contribute to efforts to attain unified Democratic control of the New York State Senate?	Yes. I have been a long critic of the IDC and I will never join the IDC. I will be a mainline Democrat. I will also focus my efforts on recruiting and cultivating candidates who will not be picked off by the IDC.
How do you think the Democratic Party can improve the way it operates in the State Senate?	I think it needs to make its messaging sharper and tougher. I've been disappointed by the way Senate Democrats run their campaigns. They don't make the affirmative case for their existence. They don't pick compelling issues to campaign on. They need a tough, progressive message, and I believe I'm the right person to get them communicating at a level they need to be at.
What is one important way you think the State Senate should be reformed, and what is your plan for trying to implement such reform?	This is more an Albany issue than a Senate issue, but the way the budget is negotiated on and then passed is insane. We do it in the dead of night, no one reads the budget, and a bunch of unrelated bills are jammed in at the last minute. I would like the Senate, as well as the Assembly, negotiating the budget with far more transparency and less haste.
What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds?	I filed with \$67,000 raised in January, as a first-time candidate. Since then, I have raised close to \$100,000 and I plan to raise a lot more. My major source of funds is small donors within the district and beyond. My average contribution is around \$80.
What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?	Few have endorsed to date because it's still early. I expect to have support from organizations and elected officials within the district and beyond.
What areas of the district do you see as your biggest sources of votes and support?	All areas. I don't take a neighborhood or ethnic group or interest group for granted. I will campaign hard, everywhere. The reason Democrats lose to someone like Marty Golden is they write off certain neighborhoods or cede territory to him. The last competitive campaign against Golden won Bay Ridge and still lost the district by 18 points. I won't do that. I don't plan to lose.
Which member of the State Senate do you admire most and why?	There are two, Liz Krueger and Gustavo Rivera. Liz is an uncompromising progressive and independent thinker. And I love Gustavo's politics and his energy. They will both do great things in the majority.
What are some of the ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life?	They can join political clubs or start their own organizations to pressure elected officials or drive policy. Organizing is so important. If you can come together and keep the heat up, politicians will listen. In my own neighborhood, there are two great new groups, Fight Back Bay Ridge and South Brooklyn Progressive Resistance, who are doing this.
What is one fun fact about you?	I'm a pretty good handball player, or used to be when I played a lot

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

Candidate Signature: 

Date: 3/26/18