



2018 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.

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| Name | Genesis Aquino |
| Preferred campaign contact information: name, email address, phone number | Rebecca Harshbarger, Campaign Manager. [REDACTED] |
| How long have you lived in your district? | I grew up and live in the district. I have been living in Sunset Park since I first migrated from the Dominican Republic as a child, and the community has been home to my family since in 1967. |
| What civic and political organizations are you involved with in your district? | I am a member of Sunset Park Latino Democrats and also a member of the newly formed Southwest Brooklyn. In addition, I am proud to volunteer my time with <i>Comite Para la Ayuda a la Comunidad</i> , a volunteer group based at a local Sunset Park church that organizes on social justice issues facing the community (e.g., BQX info session, immigration workshops). |
| What are your district's greatest strengths and struggles? | <p>The greatest strength of our district is its cultural diversity. We also have historically been a walk to work neighborhood, with a working waterfront that stretches from Red Hook to Sunset Park and provides jobs to new immigrants, public housing residents, and other working families. People in my district work hard to make our neighborhoods safe and a sanctuary for all.</p> <p>Some of the greatest struggles we are facing in the district include the underfunding of public housing that has many NYCHA residents living under inhabitable conditions affecting their health and safety. The development along our waterfront has also eliminated many jobs for local residents. This along with gentrification, real estate pressures, and weak rent regulation laws have threatened many longtime residents with displacement and homelessness. Another major struggle in the district is educational inequality; our public schools have been historically underfunded and are extremely overcrowded.</p> |
| Why do you want to serve as a District Leader? | I believe the 51st Assembly District deserves a district leader who is fully present and actively engages her constituents in the local political process. Serving as District Leader will also give me greater opportunity to have my community fairly represented since we have among the lowest amount of County Committee members. I want to help bring change to the Brooklyn Democratic Party by making it more inclusive and transparent. |
| What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of? | While working in early childhood education in Sunset Park, I met a small boy and his immigrant family that were not receiving the resources needed. His family had been through a great deal of trauma, due to language barriers, poverty, and a history of domestic violence. After extensively advocating for them, we were able to learn that the child had autism. I was able to help connect him and his family members with the resources they needed to help them thrive. This made me proud of the work I do as an educator, and gave me more strength to continue fighting for more resources for the many other families in my district. |

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| <p>What do you consider to be the highlights of your work experience?</p> | <p>Everyday I work serving unrepresented tenants to prevent eviction and homelessness, and I have worked in coalition with many other tenants and advocates and helped pass the NYC Right to Counsel, to allow low-income NYC tenants to get legal representation in the NYC Housing Court & NYCHA termination hearings. I also had the opportunity to work for the NYS Assembly and the NYC Council where I advocated for the most vulnerable New Yorkers with direct constituents services and by promoting progressive public policies.</p> |
| <p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?</p> | <p>New Kings Democrats and I are aligned in our progressive values, and share an enthusiasm for building a grassroots democracy in Brooklyn. I want NKD's endorsement so that we can work together to bring positive changes to the Brooklyn Democratic Party and [REDACTED]</p> |
| <p>If elected, what will your top three priorities be while in office?</p> | <p>My top priorities are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. making county committee meetings participatory, by helping increase the county committee membership in my district, and by pushing so that county committee members vote on nomination decisions for judgeships and special elections. 2. I will also advocate for language access, so that limited/non-English speakers in Brooklyn can fully participate and be included in decision making. 3. I will also call for the creation of a party platform rooted in social justice, that reflects Brooklyn's values and protects its residents |
| <p>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?</p> | <p>The work that New Kings Democrat and its partners has been doing is essential to changing our local government. I will continue to support NKD's work by activating my constituents and other Brooklynites to represent their blocks, that way we can increase the strength of County Committee. I will support initiatives to prevent corruption in public office and the overconcentration of power.</p> |
| <p>If elected, what reforms will you push for on County Committee?</p> | <p>I want to improve how judicial candidates are nominated. Judges should be endorsed by the party based on their work and integrity, and that county committee members can vote and be part of the selection process. I will push for measures that limit the number of proxy votes one person can hold.</p> <p>Another important reform I will push for is accessibility, for meetings to be held in spaces that are geographically central, and in close proximity to public transit and for language access.</p> |
| <p>If elected, how will you engage your constituents in local politics?</p> | <p>The 51st Assembly District has among the lowest number of County Committee members in Brooklyn as well as very low voter turnout. If elected I will work with local political and civic organizations to promote civic education with engaging public events where people can learn and debate ideas. I want to work closely with other community leaders I also strongly encourage my constituents to vote and volunteer in participatory budgeting, which helps fund much-needed projects in our community, and gives youth and adults who live in the district the opportunity to vote, regardless of their citizenship status.</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>I have a long history of community involvement, including advocating for the children and families in my district. Serving as District Leader will fully complement and elevate the work I am doing now, and give me a greater platform to engage my neighbors so that they can be more knowledgeable about civic and other community issues. Being an elected official and public servant is a 24/7 job, and I will be a district leader who is fully present in our district's community life.</p> |
| <p>What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?</p> | <p>I envision a Brooklyn Democratic Party that inspires our communities with both its</p> |

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| | message and its organizing work. I want the Brooklyn Democratic Party to be a transparent institution that represents all of us. |
| How will you contribute to efforts to attain unified Democratic control of the New York State Senate? | It is important that the Democratic Party take back the New York State Senate so it can pass legislation that our communities greatly need, such as rent reform legislation, the Liberty Act, and the Dream Act. I have given my support to Zellnor Myrie, who is running against Jesse Hamilton in my senate district. He has shown a strong commitment to conferencing with Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, our Democratic leader in the Senate. I will continue supporting other real democrats like him. |
| What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds? | Since recently launching my campaign, I have collected 58 donations. They are largely small donations from Brooklyn residents, and many are from my neighbors and other community members. |
| What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations? | I have received the full support of the Sunset Park Latino Democrats, as well as Take Back 20. I have also been supported by community leader Cesar Zuniga, and immigrant advocate Benito Bravo. |
| What areas of the district do you see as your biggest sources of votes and support? | I expect full support throughout the district, but particularly in Sunset Park, where I grew up. As someone whose life work is devoted to helping public housing residents avoid eviction and homelessness, I also anticipate warm support from Red Hook, which has the largest public housing development in New York City. |
| Which elected in New York State do you admire most and why? | I most admire Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, who has been at the forefront in fighting Trump administration and demanding a justice for Puerto Rico since the devastation of Hurricane Maria. For a long time, Congresswoman Velazquez has been a progressive voice in our congressional district, and has been a strong advocate of reforming the Brooklyn Democratic Party. She has defended our waterfronts, access to healthcare, and has been a leader for immigrant families. |
| What are some of the ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life? | I think it is important for NYC residents to vote in every single election take part in participatory budgeting, if it is active in their district. Participatory budgeting is open to community residents who are eleven and up, regardless of citizenship. Residents should also attend community board meetings, and stay in close contact with their elected officials' offices to bring awareness to local issues and tap into existing resources. They can meet with their elected officials, attend town halls, write letters, collect petitions, and interact on social media. |
| What is one fun fact about you? | I like to go to the beach, and ride my bicycle in the morning. |

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

Candidate Signature: Genesis Aguirre

Date: May 2, 2018

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your signed and scanned questionnaire to

politics@newkingsdemocrats.com and info@newkingsdemocrats.com

