



**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.*

Contact with questions: Jessica Thurston, NKD's VP of Political Affairs, [politics@newkingsdemocrats.com](mailto:politics@newkingsdemocrats.com)

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| Name   | Shaquana Boykin   |
| Assembly District and neighborhoods represented                                | Assembly District 57 which includes Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, and parts of Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights  |
| How long have you lived in your district?                                      | My younger years I lived in Crown-Heights and Since leaving foster care in April 2009 lived in Fort Greene  |
| What civic and political organizations are you involved with in your district? | Walt Whitman Tenant Association, Trellis Community Development, and Opportunity Youth United  |
| What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?          | I am proudest of all the projects I started that still run without me. After graduating from the Public Allies New York & Center for Neighborhood Leadership Community Organizing Apprenticeship in June 2015, I organized around tenant rights with the Flatbush Tenant Coalition and statewide tenant coalitions; together we won a new Brooklyn Housing Court building that will better serve the community. As a program manager of Healthy Communities Initiatives, I spearheaded an age-friendly initiative with 40+ Seniors in Fort Greene/Clinton Hill, forming a Senior Advisory Council connecting them to Pratt graduates. These relationships resulted in a book of stories from our very own seniors. I also managed a City Harvest Mobile Market of 30+ community volunteers that served 300+ NYCHA residents per month, resulting in 15k lbs of fresh food being made available to families of public housing. I worked with Corbin Hill Food Project and Fort Greene/Clinton Hill to create the first Brooklyn CSA. Nationally I am most proud of being a part of the Reconnecting Youth Campaign. Watching different organizations align with each other to secure funding with non-defense dollars under a federal appropriations cap gives me hope that we can create one million pathways for youth 16 to 24. |
| Why do you want to serve as a District Leader?                                 | After leaving my position as the Mayor's Office of Engagement Coordinator for Ingersoll Houses, the residents had a surprise lunch for me and they asked me to keep   |


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|   | <p>serving them beyond my title. I reflected on this - it was powerful to have a group of residents that believed in me. Later that month Opportunity Youth United offered me an opportunity to go to the New Politics Conference in Washington D.C. I was surrounded by Democrats that have done national or military service and answered the call to serve in politics. I was able to talk to them about my question, "How do you stay connected to your community?" I was afraid to step into politics because I did not want to lose touch with what the residents of my community truly wanted. When I researched elected positions in my district and read about the District Leader/State Committeewoman position, I immediately fell in love. A District Leader is a role for a visionary like myself, an intentional person who leads with love and understanding to connect people to politics, get our residents civically engaged, and uplift NYCHA communities. As a NYCHA resident myself I know what it takes, which is going to the source and connecting with people. It is more than an elected hosting a press conference on our grounds. It's about holding the electeds with the power to change our communities accountable, and working with them for change. One fascinating role the District Leader has is to work with County Committee general members, and I like knowing that if elected I can stay connected with County Committee members in my district and listen to their ideas and concerns on a regular basis. With the flexibility of this role I want to convene often with all electeds in the district to make sure they are working on issues and staying connected to us in the 57th AD.</p> |
| <p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?</p>          | <p>New Kings Democrats' endorsement would be an honor and a great fit because our values align. I support NKD's grassroots organizing and focus on transparency and accountability, and pushing the Democratic Party to be inclusionary. That's why I am running, to show our community what change can look like. I want our community to identify with pushing forward, reforming, and reinvigorating democracy locally.</p>   |
| <p>What are your district's greatest strengths and struggles?</p> | <p>Our district's greatest strengths are our diversity and different cultures. With diversity and different cultures we have unique skills, viewpoints, learnings, and opportunities. Our struggle is that our district has been divided, people are excluded, and some are tokenized. Our political figures believe they are not accountable to us, and we lack strong leadership.</p>  |
| <p>What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?</p>     | <p>My vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party would be a more welcoming political space that's intentional, transparent, and has increased lifestyle and age diversity for an inclusive and participatory party that reflects Brooklyn. A Democratic party that makes decisions with majority and not the few and</p>   |

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|  | <p>connects everyday Brooklynites to fill seats as members of the Democratic Party by including and or collaborating with county committee members, Constitutes and elected officials to stay connected and align with issues important to Democratic Party collectively .</p>   |
| <p>If elected, how will you support the work of New Kings Democrats and its partners to make the Brooklyn Democratic Party more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?</p>  | <p>If elected I would work with New Kings Democrats and its partners by being the champion and model to push the party and other electeds to create a more transparent, accountable, and inclusive Party. This would mean talking to County Committee and District Leaders one-on-one or collectively, being out in the community recruiting voters and promoting civic engagement, and training and educating voters and non-voters alike.</p>  |
| <p>Please review NKD's County Committee Reform Platform: <a href="https://bit.ly/2Zw4fpE">https://bit.ly/2Zw4fpE</a> Do you support these proposed reforms? Are there any that you do not support? If so, why?</p> | <p>Amazingly written, these proposals for rules amendments, meeting and proxy reforms, Assembly District Committees, financial oversight, and judicial election reforms are so crucial for our Democratic Party. It's no question that I, Shaquana Boykin, support these proposed reforms because how can we truly have a democracy without these in place? These reforms can bring our communities together, give us hope, and keep us interested in being involved in the party.</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>I believe there is no clear oversight of how the Party picks its judges, and the process is confusing. I believe the party needs to change the way judges are elected so it's not in self interest. I remember being at one of my NYCHA tenant meetings, and an elected person stopped by to talk about a judge they wanted elected, yet that judge never came to our tenant meetings themselves. When I go to vote, sometimes I look at the judicial ballot and I think to myself, "Who are these people on this ballot?" First, I believe the Party should work harder to help the public understand how their judges are chosen. I believe the Party needs to change the way its judges are elected so the public can be sure that candidates are not chosen by leadership out of self interest. Judges should have to prove that they are engaged with their communities.</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>I am already a community leader, at the national and local level, and if elected as a District Leader I want to continue engaging with the 57th AD in my new capacity. My plan is to connect with our elected officials serving the 57th AD monthly, as well as host monthly meetings with County Committee members in the district. I want to form a multicultural committee of 14 to 35 year olds to focus on engaging non-English speakers through innovative programming with existing organizations. I want to hold</p>  |

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|   | space for community organizers of the 57th AD to inspire, guide and recruit constituents to run for office or join the County Committee. I plan to reach out to our underserved communities by asking how can I help, be that through district meet-ups or attending other community meetings.  |
| 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? | If elected I will attend as many community events as possible, but if I cannot attend one I will make sure that I inspire and empower our community members to attend meetings and share what was said back to the community themselves. I will work with the Trellis crew, who pay community youth to attend meetings and bring their youth voices, and report back what was presented at these meetings. I have been doing community work for a long time, and if I had to put a number on the amount of time I envision putting into this work every week I would say more than 40 hours! Even in my free time, no matter what I do, I am always thinking of the bigger picture of what I am doing to further our community. |
| What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds?  | I have raised funds in a grassroots way by asking my friends and community at large to donate. I will not take any funds from developers or corporations.   |
| What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?   | None  |
| What areas of the district do you see as your biggest sources of votes and support?   | I see NYCHA residents of Ingersoll, Whitman, Farragut and Lafayette Gardens as a strong voter area of support. Where I babysit, Clinton Hill Co-ops, and voters around the schools I do pick ups from, PS 56, PS 11, and Greene Hill School, will also be strong supporters. I am from Crown Heights and have many connections around the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and residents from St. Marks to Eastern Parkway. In Fort Greene, I am well known on Myrtle Ave. I'm looking forward to meeting community members from all corners of the district!  |
| Is there a District Leader in Brooklyn or elsewhere in NYC who you admire? If so, why?  | Sadly, I have known District Leaders for years and never realized that was their role because I never saw them as strong community leaders. The new District Leaders running around Brooklyn all inspire me because without the title they are already doing great work: Sammy, Kristina, Jesse, Julio. They are all different, yet all make politics feel inclusive and inviting and that's what I want to do. I want to break the barriers and forget the status quo of only electing lawyers and business degree majors in local politics. I look up to the new generation of diverse District Leaders.  |
| What is one fun fact about you?   | Fun Fact - In Elementary School at PS 138 we had a track in our gym. I was always bigger, but I decided to run the track that day and I ran about 3 laps before I realized my jeans   |

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|  | ripped! What I learned is that just because your pants rip doesn't mean you should stop running, sometimes things just happen. You laugh and regroup - or at that time I laughed and my gym teacher stapled my pants together because I refused to leave school for ripped jeans. I stayed the entire day! |
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I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature:  Date: 2.28.2020

**You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your signed and scanned questionnaire to [politics@newkingsdemocrats.com](mailto:politics@newkingsdemocrats.com)**