



**2020 City Council 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, we will circulate your questionnaire to our members before the vote.*

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

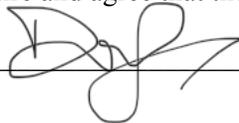
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| Name  | Deirdre Levy   |
| Council District number and neighborhoods represented                         | 35 – Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Fort Greene, Bed-Stuy, Clinton Hill  |
| How long have you lived in the above district?                                | 4 years in my district, but this is my 8 <sup>th</sup> year teaching in the district and I am a born and raised New Yorker. I am able to live in my district because I qualified for the housing lottery.  |
| Why do you want to serve as a member of the NYC Council?                      | I want to be a member of the NYC City Council because I am tired of elected officials with no education experience making decisions for NYC public schools. This is my 8 <sup>th</sup> year working as a special education teacher. I have seen the inequalities of the students in my district and want to ensure that teacher, student and parent voices are elevated so that every child has the best educational outcome that meets their individual needs. I believe in inclusivity and ensuring that more people in our localities feel connected to civic engagement government. I believe that a member of the NYC Council should be a person who stands up for the people and fights for what they need.  |
| What civic and political organizations are you involved with in the district? | I have been involved with the Crown Heights Mutual Aid and the Clinton Hill Fort Greene Aid. I am also a member of the 535 Carlton Ave. Tenant Association and a member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team at my school, PS9.   |
| What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?         | This is my 8 <sup>th</sup> year teaching with the NYC Department of Education in my district. This is what I am most proud of because I have had the privilege of working with special needs kids in District 75 and within community classroom settings. I have dedicated my life to education – from working with young adults in higher education to working with children of all age levels. When resources are limited, I am proud of the fact that I am able to find opportunities. I have participated in the participatory budgeting cycle and have secured \$200,000 in renovated ADA accessible bathroom funding for my school, became a Jane Goodall Roots and Shoots mini grant recipient, and have successfully obtained project funding from Donors Choose. I believe that there are always opportunities out there to help my students. |
| What are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the district?       | Recovery from the covid19 continues to challenge my district which include the areas of helping small businesses, ensuring that every  |

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|  | child's educational needs are met, the ability to be able to afford housing and ensure that members of the community have food to eat.   |
| Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?  | I was a policy major in Albany and have always committed myself to working with people to make communities better, whether it has been with AmeriCorps as a City year volunteer or as a special education teacher. I appreciate how New Kings Democrats wants to engage more community members to government practices             |
| If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?  | My top three legislative and budgetary priorities are equity in education, affordable housing and food security.   |
| What is one thing you would do to make New York City government more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?   | Increase the presence of education related materials on social media to reach more people. I think this is what would help make the processes more transparent and inclusive.  |
| Please review NKD's voting rights platform: <a href="https://www.newkingsdemocrats.com/voting_rights">https://www.newkingsdemocrats.com/voting_rights</a> . In what ways would you like to expand voting access, and how can you do this as a member of the NYC Council? | I agree with NKD's voting rights platform and will advocate for expanding voting access.   |
| What criminal justice reforms would you like to see the Council implement?   | I think that the city council should focus on more restorative justice practices to rehabilitate people who are incarcerated.  |
| What specific racial justice issues are impacting the district and how would you address them as a Council Member?   | Affordable housing is a racial justice issue. If elected, I would have more ways to host workshops to help people know hwo they are impacted by developments and homeowner workshops. I believe that the more people are educated about these processes, the more that they will take an active role in fighting for these issues. |
| What is your perspective on, and what would be your plan regarding, the funding of the NYPD?   | I believe that resources should be re-allocated across different departments to ensure safety within communities. I believe that local organizing, especially with what I've learned by being a part of the Crown Heights Mutual Aid group, has helped neighbors come together safely to protect our neighborhoods.                |
| What housing issues specific to your council district concern you most, and how would you address them if elected?   | I am concerned that there is overdevelopment in the district and that more and more people from the neighborhood are moving away because the rent is expensive.  |
| Do you support cancelling rent for tenants and small business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic?   | Yes  |
| What will you do to help reach more gender equity within the NYC Council?  | I believe in supporting more women who are running in the city council and to encourage more women to run in the future.   |
| In reviewing the NYC Budget, what specific categories do you think should be either cut or increased to help the city's current economic predicament?  | The education budget should be increased to help the needs of students, teachers and parents in order to promote equity within the system.   |
| What are your recovery priorities for the district related to the COVID-19 pandemic?   | My recovery priorities are helping those who are jobless, instability with educational outcomes, small businesses and food security.   |

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| What would you do to reform the Land Use process to promote racial and social equity?  | I think reforming the ULURP process is necessary. It is important to protect our local neighborhoods and community members, as developments can impact the lives of people of color and low income residents. I think organizing neighbors has helped with issues like the Industry rezoning and when Amazon wanted to come to LIC.   |
| What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?   | I believe that we should be united to elevate progressive ideals that can help local communities feel safe and prosper.   |
| New Kings Democrats has proposed several <a href="#">rules changes</a> to be considered by the County Committee. Do you support the proposals? If elected, will you advocate for these and other reforms that democratize power within the County Committee? | I support these proposals and other proposals that ensure that full transparency and continued engagement in the community is guaranteed.   |
| How much money have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources?  | \$4,000. My major sources are local donations within my district and NYC.   |
| Are you accepting campaign contributions from law enforcement unions?  | No  |
| What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?  | As a nontraditional candidate working full time as a Special Education teacher in a NYC public school, I am still applying for endorsements.  |
| Of the elected officials in the NYC Council, who do you admire most and why?   | I admire what Mark Treyger has done as a former teacher. I admire his advocacy and visibility in education during the pandemic. I think it is important to have more council members who were former educators.   |
| What are some of the best ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life?   | I think that there has to be more education for NYC residents, more reach on social media and more ways to mobilize young people in the efforts. When processes are broken down and made transparent, that is when information can be easily accessed and can encourage more civic engagement. Applying for participatory budgeting and discretionary funding programs should be more widely communicated with community members. |
| What is one fun fact about you?  | I love to sing in front of strangers at Karaoke bars (when they were open).   |

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

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

12/7/20

***You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please email your signed and scanned questionnaire as a PDF to [politics@newkingsdemocrats.com](mailto:politics@newkingsdemocrats.com)***