

Thank you for agreeing to complete the South Central Brooklyn United for Progress AD51 candidate questionnaire. Your answers to these questions will be made available to the public on our website, <http://scbkunitedforprogress.org/>, and will be promoted on our Facebook page and twitter feed.

Answers are due by the end of day February 20 if you want to be considered for endorsement!

Campaign Information

What is your name?

Genesis Aquino

What office are you running for?

NYS Assembly District 51

Who is the point of contact for your campaign and what is the best way to get in touch with them? Ruvi Lopez, @ruvilopez@gmail.com

What is your campaign address?

We are currently looking for an office location.

Our mailing address is: PO BOX 348 Brooklyn NY 11220

What is your campaign phone number?

347-762-4015

What is your campaign email?

Genesisaquinonyc@gmail.com

What is your campaign website?

GenesisForNewYork.com

Is your campaign on social media? If so, what platform(s) and what are the names?

Instagram, facebook & twitter - @GenesisAquinoNY

Campaign Issues

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding health care and what would you do to address them?

No access to affordable health care is the main issue affecting New Yorkers and people in my community. Unfortunately way too many working class New Yorkers do not have jobs that provide high quality health care, many do not have health insurance at all. My district has one of the highest undocumented populations in NYC and that means many do not have health care at all because they do not qualify under The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act based on their immigration status.

I believe healthcare is a human right, and we need to get out of the box propose policies and programs that would truly provide healthcare for all. I will work to pass the New York Health Act (NYHA) an advocate for universal health care that is free of cost, independent of immigration status, and comprehensive. I will work to ensure that insurance companies are mandated to cover trans related healthcare, as well as reproductive health, mental health and prescription drugs.

I'm glad we passed the Reproductive Health Act, bringing the state law in line with Roe v. Wade, but we still have significant work to do. Maternal mortality rates for black women are far too high, and continue to grow. I would prioritize closing the gap in maternal health outcomes, including better access to postpartum care. I would also ensure that all New York state hospitals and community health centers have clear action plans to ensure that communities have access to reproductive care. I will also advocate to ensure that the downstate hospitals are adequately funded.

I will co-sponsor Assembly Bill A2352 which requires disclosure by crisis pregnancy centers, and allow clients to be fully informed of services offered at the so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" and enhances self determination.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district specifically immigrant rights and access to resources and what would you do to address them?

Immigrants in my district are facing many of the same challenges most working class New Yorkers are facing; lack of affordable housing, health care, livable wages and reliable transportation. Immigrants in my community are not one single issue, yet for us it's important that we feel safe in our own communities and sacred spaces like schools, court and hospitals.

On a daily basis, immigrant New Yorkers are being targeted for immigration enforcement in and around their homes and workplaces, at traffic stops, and at sensitive places such as courts and public offices. This is part of the Trump administration's effort to use every imaginable tool to bolster inhumane immigration enforcement and undertake mass deportation.

It is my priority to pass the NY Liberty Act, NYS Health Act and Protect Our Courts Act. Combined these legislation will get NY State closer to being a sanctuary state for our community members, codify the removal of ICE from the courts (unless they have a judicial warrant), access to health care we need to thrive in our communities.

I believe we need to ensure that the New York State police and municipalities throughout New York value both the vulnerability and potential of undocumented immigrant New Yorkers. We need state agencies to support defensive immigration strategies and prioritize the protection and safety of immigrants into their programmatic offerings. Criminal justice reform and immigration reform are interconnected, too often immigrants are caught up in petty Broken Windows "crimes" that have led to deportation issues. Minority communities are overwhelmingly policed in regards to broken windows policy so in order for NYC to be a true sanctuary city broken windows policing needs to go.

As Assembly Member, I will also expand resources for adult literacy classes, which are often the best pathway to better jobs and increase the ability of immigrants to be engaged in their communities.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding civil rights and criminal justice and what would you do to address them?

Addressing systemic racial disparities within our justice system has been a challenge for New York State. We must reduce our addition to mass incarceration and also address the issue of police violence head on by making it possible for the public to access law enforcement records of misconduct and discipline and track data on police interactions with the public. These common sense changes can help rebuild trust while continuing to keep both police and communities safe.

When elected I commit to working with grassroots organizations and communities disproportionately affected towards ensuring we pass a legislative package to increase police transparency and reduce unnecessary arrests. This includes full decriminalization of marijuana, and investing in communities disproportionately affected by the war on drugs. I will work to pass the following:

Bill A1617B - Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act, which attempts to legalize marijuana through the taxation and regulation of marijuana sales, including the allocation of revenue to communities most harmed by the war on drugs, including communities within AD 51.

Bill A2500 - known as "Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement" Act (the HALT Solitary Confinement Act.) When passed it will amend NYS correction law to make it more humane by eliminating long term isolated confinement, restricting the use of segregated confinement and creating therapeutic alternatives to solitary confinement in NYS jails and prisons.

Bill A2513 to fully repeal section 50a of NYS civil rights law, a statute that currently prevents the public from accessing law enforcement records of misconduct and discipline.

Bill A05472 known as Police Statistics & Transparency (STAT) Act which would make statistical information regarding interactions with police, including arrests and the death of individuals while in the custody of the police, available to the public.

Bill A4346A known as Fair and Timely Parole Act, which ensures that the parole release process is based on who people are today and their accomplishments while incarcerated, not solely on their crime of conviction

I will work to support SA654 a bill that would repeal Penal Law 240.37, Loitering for the Purpose of Prostitution, a/k/a the “Walking While Trans Ban”. Transgender and cisgender women of color should have the freedom to walk or talk to people in the streets without being targetted as criminals.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding public schools and education and what would you do to address them?

Education inequality is the biggest overall challenge faced by New Yorkers. Our public education system has failed the majority of our children, those raised in poor and working class families.

Schools in AD 51 have been disproportionately impacted by underfunding and socio-economic segregation. Our classrooms are overcrowded and the funding received is not enough to cover our children’s needs. As an elected I will work tirelessly to ensure that everyone in NYS has education guaranteed as a human right, and that our children have access to quality education. I will advocate to ensure we increase funding to include \$4 billion in foundation aid formula for pre-k to 12 public schools. I will work to close the school to prison pipeline, by allocating to have a balanced ratio of social workers and guidance counselor to students, and will support and work with college in Albany to ensure reduce suspension in all grades and ensure a complete ban on suspension for grades K to 3. Ensuring we have supportive interventions can help us reduce the amount of law enforcement officers in our local schools.

Our schools should work for all students, including children with disabilities and those learning English as a second language. Children that go to schools in my district often struggle because our schools lack services, and they are forced to travel to other neighborhoods, often

traveling hours away. It's my priority to advocate for and fund programming for schools in my district to increase equity and access to services for bilingual families and children of special needs. This also means exploring ways for our school's to have a curriculum that incorporates the perspective of people who have been historically oppressed.

I fight for reentry programs and higher education opportunities to ensure people in our communities are integrated back in the economy after incarceration. I would seek ways to bring job training resources for youth, and communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs.

Increasing access to Arts and STEAM programs is also very important to me. I am committed to fully funding our public schools and afterschool programs, and equip them to provide arts programming, and to expand STEM programs throughout NYS. Especially for children who are traditionally underrepresented in science and technology.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding housing and what would you do to address them?

Lack of affordable housing is almost an eternal crisis in our city, that has also expanded throughout the state of NY. In 51 we are not exempt from the cruelty of the real estate industry, displacement and profit centered development.

In order to stop displacement of our working class communities we must continue the fight to until we land and housing is decommmodified. I will work to expand tenants' protection until we achieve a state-wide universal rent control in NYS. Not only to preserve our current stock rent regulated units but also by ensuring all tenants are able to enjoy their safety and comfort and peace of their homes; free from exorbitant rent hikes, harassment and retaliation. That is why support by the Good Cause eviction bill, eliminating MCIs and full commitment to fully funding NYCHA.

I will work to repeal the Urstadt law, NYC housing needs are unique compared to the rest of the state and our city should control our housing stock. Is equally important that we address the shelter industrial complex as we work to eliminate homelessness. I will support setting

aside 15% of all units created in new state subsidized affordable housing projects for homeless families and individuals. I will also support models of collective land ownership that lead to permanent affordability and help communities have self determination.

All of these goals are possible and can be accomplished if we decide to stop giving millionaires a break and start taxing the rich!

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding public transit and what would you do to address them?

Working class New Yorkers everyday are challenged by an unreliable outdated public transit system. Mayor part of my district, Red Hook, can be called a transit desert, isolated from other parts of Brooklyn, disproportionately affected by our NYC's history of racist urban design. In Sunset Park we are challenged by two of the city's slowest lines; the R train and B37 bus, and no wheelchair accessible stations in the whole district.

As New York works to meet our new climate goals, I will push so that NY increases investments in green infrastructure, which includes funding the MTA and transitioning to a low carbon mass transit system. I strongly believe that fares should not be increased and we should work towards making the subway and buses free in New York State and work to link the LIRR, NJ Transit, and Metro North with the MTA to have a single interconnected low-carbon system.

In November 2019, the Assembly held its first oversight hearing on the MTA since 2014. In order to provide adequate oversight, the Assembly must hold regular hearings to get updates from MTA Chairman and board members on the implementation of MTA's capital plan. My understanding is that once the signal system is updated (no small feat) the system will be able to add additional trains that will alleviate overcrowding. I will work tirelessly in the Assembly to make sure there are adequate funds to carry this out and that the plan is not interfered with by the Governor.

What more do you think could be done in regards to street safety in your district and/or in all of New York City / State?

We need comprehensive city planning and ensure that our streets are designed for safety. My district has one of the highest rates of cyclist and pedestrian accidents, most could have been avoided. Reducing the speed limit has not been enough, it's important that we involve the local community on a visioning of our streets. We must increase and or change the way car drivers and cyclists are educated about traffic. NYS must invest in infrastructure so that our streets are accessible for all residents, including seniors and individuals with disabilities.

What is your vision for a just and equitable New York election and campaign finance system?

I envision a NY State with a vital democracy and without voter suppression. My vision is for NY to be a state where everyone has the opportunity to vote for the candidate *and* party of their choice; where anyone can run for office regardless of their wealth and connections; and where candidates are accountable to their constituents, not beholden to a few wealthy campaign contributors.

To make that vision true, I will work for the passage of Automatic Voter Registration. This legislation will require state agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Health to register people to vote and/or update their existing voter registration information unless they decline to do so ("opt out") and allows people to register to vote and cast their vote on Election Day.

I support and will advocate for public financing of state elections with at least a \$6 to \$1 match for all small donations from New Yorkers in state elections, including district attorney and state judicial races. I also support lowering the contribution limits \$7,500 for state-wide races (from \$18,000), \$5,000 for Senate (from \$10,000) and \$2,500 for Assembly (from \$6,000).

My district has low voter turnout, which means many voices are not being represented. I would support increased funding for civic engagement organizations, prioritizing those with initiatives that center immigrants and underrepresented populations. I am committed to

working closely with community organizers to learn first hand about the issues and challenges, and to work with them to identify ways to improve voter turnout.

As someone who speaks english as a second language and grew up in a multilingual community, I will fight so that all voters have language access, especially in the 51st AD, where many voters prefer to write and speak a language other than English.

What is your opinion on the Industry City rezoning and what would you do about it?

I oppose Industry City's proposed rezoning. If passed, the rezoning will accelate gentrification and displacement in our community, and Brooklyn overall. The company has not shown good faith and its proposed development it's not focused on the local community but in profiting from it. I believe it is time transformative changes and that means challenging corporate developers and daring to envision development focus on human welfare.

What other issues do you consider important and how will you address them?

Climate Justice

It is imperative that we focus aggressively on protecting our environment and combating climate change. NYS can combat the climate crisis by moving our economy to 100% renewable energy. I will fight to ensure \$1 billion is allocated in the state budget for capital projects to create a Climate and Community Investment Fund, focused on renewable energy, infrastructure, and energy efficiency programs that will mitigate climate changing emissions, reduce air pollution, and protect the vulnerable communities hit hardest by the economic, social, and health impacts of fossil fuel based energy. I also will oppose new fossil fuel infrastructure, including fracked gas pipelines in New York State.

Worker's Rights

For me and my community it is also extremely important to strengthen workers' rights. As Co-Chair of the Laundry Workers' Center I have worked to improve the living and working conditions of low wage laundry, warehouse, and food service workers in New York City. I stood side by side in solidarity with workers on B&H, Liberato restaurant workers, and on-going laundromat campaigns in Harlem and Brooklyn. I have used my voice and platforms and stood on picket lines to support worker and unionization efforts.

When elected I will work to reintroduce the SWEAT aimed to protect low wage workers from wage theft by exploitative employers. New York should lead the country by passing protections for the right to unionize and bolstering baseline workplace standards like prevailing wage, paid sick days, safe staffing minimums for healthcare workers, access to affordable health care for all workers and clear definitions of who is an employee and who is an independent contractor so that workers in the gig economy can not be taken advantage of by giant corporations.

Assembly District 51 encompasses many different communities and diverse neighborhoods. How do you plan to give voice to the communities and engage them in partnership?

As Black-Latina immigrant raised in a working class family, I understand very well the issues facing my community. I grew up attending underfunded public schools while my parents worked as factory and domestic laborers. I understand what it means to get evicted due to an unsustainable minimum wage, while facing a just immigration system and other institutional barriers placed on low income people of color in disenfranchised communities like Sunset Park and Red Hook. These experiences connect me to the communities I will represent and are the reason why I am running a powered powered campaign.

I want to work toward building a democracy that goes beyond increasing participation, but that changes relationships of power. I believe that real democracy is about liberty, welfare and diversity. In this sense, my campaign recognizes the importance of the struggles all people subject to unfair treatment such as discrimination or violence. Therefore I am fully committed to working along side the immigrant, feminist, civil rights and LGBTQI movements.

I will continue to strive to create an environment of participatory democracy. By building a real process of inclusive participation. I will open venues for residents to be informed about what is going on in Albany, what I am doing for them and to voice their opinions in the legislative process. I will ensure that I am accessible by attending local public meetings and events and ensure my office is accessible and open at hours that benefit the working class communities

that I represent. I am also committed to making my office mobile and bring our series to the community especially to the neighbors that are often excluded from governmental spaces.

For fun (answers to these questions are not required)

If your district had a musical anthem, what would it be and why?

Alma Jarocha - Papito

It talks about adversities faced by brown/black people and also celebrates our resilience.

What is your favorite restaurant in your district?

My favorite restaurant just closed due to rent hike. My newest favorite is Yafa Cafe, owned by immigrant youth raised in Sunset Park.

