

Campaign Information

What is your name? *Cyril F. Joseph*

What are your preferred pronouns? *He/him.*

What office are you running for? *City Council Member, 45th District.*

Who is the point of contact for your campaign and what is the best way to get in touch with them? *Contact Amy Klein, Director of Communications, via email at cyrilforcitycouncil@gmail.com.*

What is your campaign address? *1020 Ralph Avenue Apt. 3, Brooklyn, NY 11236.*

What is your campaign phone number? *347 652 9710*

What is your campaign email address? cyrilforcitycouncil@gmail.com

What is your campaign website? www.cyrilforcitycouncil.com

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

We currently have a Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/CJNYCDEM CANDIDATE45THDISTRICT. *We will be adding an Instagram account soon. You can learn more about Cyril's contributions to the community at the Umoja Garden Instagram @Umoja_Garden1448 as well.*

Campaign Issues

What would you do to improve **health care** as a city council member?

I believe health has two components: mental health and physical health. As city council member, I would increase funding for mental health care to provide more services and more accurate services for the community. I would work for more mental health screening, counseling, and support services. We need better outpatient mental healthcare, beyond hospitalization during mental health crises. The Department of Health should conduct free mental health screenings for the community and offer education on mental health issues and medication.

To improve general health care, I would provide more funding for clinics and hospitals and cut down the red tape in our insurance system that prevents patients from getting proper services. I would work to implement a free or low-cost citywide insurance program to assist those less fortunate than ourselves. I would require hospitals and clinics to provide services that are often denied such as prenatal care.

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?

In District 45, as in NYC, we have immigrants from the Caribbean Islands, the Middle East, Russia, European countries, Latin American countries, and more. These immigrant communities face many issues—for example, VISA issues, fear of ICE, and how to become productive citizens. Immigrants—for example, Muslims from the Middle East—may also be scorned in America due to their religion. The most important issue is the fact that immigrants are fearful of deportation and family separation.

To address this issue, I would hold educational seminars including lawyers and immigration experts to inform immigrants of their rights. I would also help educate immigrants on how to create change. As an immigrant myself, I have worked with Catholic charities and with the consulates of various countries to educate other immigrants on their rights. As a city council member, in addition to organizing these educational workshops in my district, I would also prioritize hiring staff who speak various languages to ensure that our messages are clear and precise for all constituent residents.

I would work very hard to enforce liberty and justice by having strict laws that protect Immigrants from detention and deportation. I would collaborate with nonprofits and other government agencies to create laws that establish New York City as a Sanctuary City.

In addition to supporting immigrant rights, I plan to assist immigrants in finding sustainable housing and high paying jobs. Please see below for descriptions of my plans in these areas.

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?

Black and Brown New Yorkers including those in my district are strongly impacted by the school to prison pipeline and by mass incarceration. I am committed to reforming the criminal justice system to end the school to prison pipeline, stop mass incarceration, and improve the lives of Black and Brown New Yorkers.

To end the school to prison pipeline, I will fund education, jobs, and mental health programs, not prisons. I will support reducing the number of armed police officers and vehicle patrols in our community. To better resolve nonviolent conflicts, mental health challenges, and homelessness, I would hire trained professionals in these fields, rather than police officers.

A major step in my plan to end the school to prison pipeline involves creating vocational training centers in my district and helping young people secure high paying jobs by offering tax credits to local businesses who hire graduates of these training centers. I would also assist with

policies to decriminalize marijuana use and small drug offenses, and I would end the truancy program.

To end mass incarceration, I would legislate to send those who commit low-level crimes to alternate programs that enhance their capability of becoming productive and active members of society. Rather than building more jails in New York City, we should prioritize referring New Yorkers to social services, including mental health care and addiction treatment centers. We must also make sure that inmates returning from prison receive expunged records so that they can access jobs and be more productive in the community without the stigma of incarceration.

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?

The biggest challenges regarding public schools and education are the lack of funding for public education, the Mayor's control of the school system, and the unequal resources for low-income students.

To address these challenges, I would support New York City fulfilling the promise of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity to increase funding for public schools by \$4B, most of which is owed to districts that have large numbers of low-income students. I would also advocate for returning oversight of the school system to the Board of Education, rather than the Mayor.

To provide greater educational resources for low-income students, we need to use the model of Community Schools, where schools partner with social services to assist students with educational barriers such as homelessness. In District 45, for example, which ranks #18 out of 51 districts in New York City by the highest percentage of homeless students, $\frac{1}{3}$ of homeless students are chronically absent, and only 12% and 13% are proficient in Math and ELA, respectively. We should connect schools with social services so that students and their families can receive support through schools to improve their life outcomes.

To improve student participation in education, I would take action to eliminate the punishments of expelling and suspending students, as these punishments have been shown to disproportionately affect Black and Brown youth.

I would also work to improve the city's early childhood education programs so that students could receive free educational daycare.

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?

We have a housing crisis in New York, and rents are skyrocketing in my district. Even those apartments the City calls "affordable housing" are no longer affordable or sustainable for the majority of us.

I pledge to create an independent board to oversee our city's land use process, stopping big real estate developers from getting contracts under the table. We need public hearings on every part of the ULURP process, and we need to make this a fully community effort. As a city council member, I will ensure that the unused land in my district goes to building new housing with sustainable rents for low-income New Yorkers. And I would introduce legislation to offer tax credits to landlords who reduce rent for families.

It is also important to provide more New Yorkers with pathways to home ownership. I would propose a plan to sell NYCHA apartments to their residents, offering them a chance to become homeowners rather than renters. This plan would involve a rent-to-own option or a mortgage with a low interest rate. Home ownership could give NYCHA residents more control over these buildings and reduce some of the problems in the NYCHA system.

What would you do to improve **transit and street (pedestrian/bicycle/car) safety** for New Yorkers in your district?

I would add high-density lighting in our district to improve pedestrian safety, especially at night. We should have illuminated signs within the district, including traffic signs. I would also revamp our subway system and subway stations with better lighting, security, and cleanliness to reduce crime.

I would add bike lanes to major roads to help with bicyclists' safety. I would also add signs to dangerous intersections near schools, as many schools in my district lack proper signage in the area.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **the environment, including access to, maintenance, development and preservation of parks and other open spaces** and what would you do to address them?

New York needs more green spaces, and supervision of these spaces through GreenThumb and the City Parks Foundation. In my district, there are abundant green spaces, but they are not well taken care of, leading to the accumulation of rodents and the dumping of trash and construction debris.

We need to be more strict and allow GreenThumb to inspect and maintain all green spaces. I would enforce the Clean Act Law, which holds owners of properties accountable for keeping green spaces clean, and I would hold agencies that are responsible for keeping these properties clean to a higher standard. If unused land is governmentally owned, I would advocate for turning it into green space or sustainable housing.

I would also enforce the legislation that prevents green space from being taken away from community gardeners or volunteers and given to private companies. We need green space for

all New Yorkers, especially given the economy that we are in. I would support community gardens and programming that educates youth and adults on sustainable agriculture.

A secondary environmental concern in my district is the inadequate maintenance of the catch basins, leading to flooding. The Department of Environmental Protection should clean out the catch basins more than once every ten years to prevent flooding, as trash builds up. I would also push the Department of Environmental protection to properly maintain all fire hydrants within the district.

New York City will use **Ranked Choice Voting** for your June primary. How do you feel about this and why?

I don't think ranked choice voting is a good idea for democracy. I do not think that it will bring along the necessary changes that we need to make. Ranked choice voting may lead to the election of more moderate candidates, who may be ranked second or third, and do not take as significant an interest in the community's needs. Ultimately, what we need to change is the process of Get out the Vote outreach to engage more of our community in democracy.

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

COVID-19 and the resulting economic crisis has harmed many small businesses in New York City and led to mass layoffs, as well as business closures. As City Council member, I will protect the Small Business Jobs Survival Act to support small businesses and workers.

I will stop the closing of our small businesses, as well as holding lawmakers accountable for not giving a real lifeline to save them. City Hall has not acted for decades on behalf of small business owners and has denied justice for small business owners.

I don't want to walk my district to count empty stores or shelves in small businesses. I will work hard to pass legislation to secure small businesses' long-term leases for up to ten years.

I will also create more jobs by building Vocational Education Training Centers and offering tax credits to small businesses who hire graduates of these programs. My district needs VOTEC centers and jobs for all, and I will prioritize developing a VOTEC in my district immediately.

For fun (answers to these questions are not required)

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

My own original song, "For the People / Of the People." We will build for the people, and we are here for the people.

What is your favorite restaurant in your district?

I don't eat out too much. Olive Green is a vegetarian restaurant I enjoy.